

# Great Gatherings

## - a SF approach to working with large groups

*Workshop given at the SOLWorld conference 2012 in Oxford*



**DOCUMENTING  
THE PROCESS**

## Background

We managed to get through the first round with documenting (the following pages).

The rest was talk and therefore you won't be able to read more. But in this simplistic way you get the idea of a photo-protocol.

*I use my slides as process descriptions.*

*They are to be seen as "buoy's" around the dialogues through the day.*



- Split people up in small groups
  - Max 6
- Let them sit face to face
- Create physical movement
- Change group constellations occasionally



## Some principles

- How do you create awareness of an upcoming event by building on what already works?

## Start before you begin

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- Transparency in process
- Sharing insights and ideas

## Sharing & document



## Sharing & document

- Your experience?



## "Start before you begin"

*Less is more when it comes to process description. You know what I am writing because you were there in the workshop.*

*Does that exclude others from benefitting from this material or does that make you the ambassador of the further process? Well, if I had a list of participants I'd include that at the end of this document, so what do you think? ☺*

Dear [persons name]

In two weeks we are all going to meet and spend a whole day working together on the topic:

### **The world's best workplace**

We are going to talk about how we can create a better work environment with high professionalism, less stress and more fun and learning.

Before we meet I have an observation task for you:

From now and till we meet, please notice any small signs at your work that indicates this company actually has potential to some day become the world's best workplace.

Signs like:

- a job accomplished well - something you were actively involved in
- a conversation, presentation or a meeting that was slightly different from what you usually experience.

And please think about:

- what happened that made it different?
  - o what else?
- how was that useful for you?
- if something can be learned from that - what would that be?
  - o what else could be learned?

We will share each other's discoveries when we meet.  
Looking forward to meet you!

Best wishes,  
Jesper H Christiansen  
- your facilitator for the day

*Make the email personal. You can use free mail services like MailChimp or others to make a template.*

*As long as you write the persons name it doesn't matter that the text is the same going out to everyone.*

## **Purpose of the e-mail:**

- create awareness of upcoming event
- focus on what already works (linked to theme)
- introduce words and phrases that will be used at the event
- start "rumors" about what is to come

## **Question**

*Based on the example of this email. How would you create awareness of an upcoming event by building on what already works?*

## **Process**

Round A: in groups, come up with more ideas on how to engage participants before an event.  
Round B: pass on your work to the group next to you.

Qualify the ideas: are they understandable? If yes, tick them off. If no, improve the wording to make the ideas more understandable.

Always ask people to write legibly and always expect them to do so in their own understanding (hint: it's all constructivism).

Alternatively make them write on flipcharts and make sure they only write with thick markers.

BRING AN ~~EXAMPLE~~<sup>(A)</sup>  
OF YOUR BEST  
EXPERIENCE WITH  
THE SUBJECT

Suppose, this was the (B)  
best workshop you ever did,  
how would you know

Ask: email  
what would have to happen in  
event for it to be useful to  
you.

or Scaling question →

Suppose the event is  
extremely useful for you,  
on a scale from 1 to 10,  
it would be a 10!

What would you see happening?

B



✓ Plan ahead and give out chocolate hearts for positive relevant behaviour before the event. (anonymous or not)

A

## Observation task in an email

observation task :

e.g. What works well already?

e.g. What ~~too~~<sup>small</sup> stories do you observe that demonstrate that?

(write it down and bring it on the workshop)

B

✓ Call them and ask about A their success (if group size permits)

✓ Send list of participants

✓ Send

✓ have<sup>SF</sup> group conversations before the event, using a chairman or facilitator

✓ face group book before

✓ Spread rumours: first define ambassadors that conduct positive gossip or share SF questions

• Send mini SF questionnaire (5 questions) "you have to invite a colleague/friend to ask you these questions"

The most important aspect of a photo-protocol is that the quality of the pictures is good!

Unfocused pictures like these make the material more difficult to read (and it makes your photo-protocol look cheap).

You can always edit the photo afterwards like I've done, but you can spend your time on better things than that.

So: take your time photographing the material.



✓ Send a letter with observation task A

✓ Send a chocolate and invite them to  
put it secretly on the table of the  
person they had a nice conversation  
with.

✓ Send a feather to anticipate lightness  
in their communication.

like SOL 2012  
✓ Send postcards, email with little  
secrets! keep people posted  
secret code that to log on  
all info not given before  
feed curiosity

A

• FIND A QUOTE, AN APHORISM,

A POET, A PICTURE, ...  
SYMBOLIZING THE BEST HOPES FOR  
A SUCCESSFUL  
~~BRING IT ALONG~~ TRAINING/...

• BRING IT ALONG IN A PRINTED WAY

⇒ PRESENT IN THE BEGINNING (SMALL GROUPS)  
⇒ PERSONALIZE THE ROOM

ⓑ ✓



### Document format and picture quality

Layout format: always A4. Make sure that people who want can print it.

File format: PDF - can be read on almost any electronic device. Can be compressed without losing much quality = good for digital distributing.

Resolution: 150 dpi – enough to look good on average printers. Anything higher than that is overkill.

Size of pictures: approx. 18 x 25 cm to make sure you can scale in case of “visual challenging handwriting”.

WHEN YOU'VE  
ATTENDED A  
WORKSHOP THAT  
WENT WELL, WHAT  
MADE IT THAT WAY? (A)

BRING A STORY (A)  
THAT ILLUSTRATES  
THE SUBJECT  
WE WILL DISCUSS  
SUCCESS  
OBJECT | POEM | MUSIC  
... something

- ✓ Interview each other.
- Share ideas with colleagues
- Self assessment.
- ✓ Interview tour “leaser” tour
- Return
- What do you think?
- Interview CEO FUT. PFT (like wgh was mellen)

- Cross-team sharing of what works well
- Questionnaire on what you do well  
| colleagues
- Meet, greet and share expectations (Pre-conference speed dating)



When participants are working on each other's material, it's a good idea to use different colours to indicate the various phases.

As it makes it a whole lot easier for you to categorise afterwards!

A) MANAGEMENT TEAM  
# PREPARING IN ADVANCE  
They motivate, spread  
the word, ....

B  
How would you know as a M.T.  
that your team will be  
CONFIDENT WITH THE UPCOMING  
EVENT

A  
DURING WBC COME  
COFFEE - BEFORE START OF EVENT  
GIVE PEOPLE A WARM-UP  
QUESTION,

B  
WARM-UP QUESTION:  
① How will you notice that this  
day is useful for you?  
② How will you know after one  
hour when the event has started  
that it is worth staying, not returning  
to your workplace?