

# Pro Action Cafe

Methodology Exploration

ART OF HOSTING Zagreb, 12.2.2010.

# What is it?

- ***Integrate learning and action***
- Use best of world cafe and open space forms:
  - ***world cafe*** is simple and fast way 2 activate collective intelligence, create connections between people, dissolve judgments and opinions, you break and open, but convergence could be sloppy, lots of ideas but sometimes no ownership
  - in ***open space*** people are challenged 2 take action, individuals are taking responsibility to move forward

# Methodology Basics

Could be done in 2-3 hours.

(comment: Pro Action Cafe session in AOH Zagreb had 28 participants with 2 hosts and took 3.5 hours, including opening circle, topic selection, 3 iterations and closing circle)

You need at least 2 hosts.

# Methodology Basics

- start in circle (similar to open space) + cafe setup
- hosts call for individuals 2 step in and creates topics that are important for them
  
- logistics: divide number of people by 4
  - = number of tables (each table has 4 chairs)
  - = number of topics (each topic = *project* )
  - = number of topic owners (= *project owners* )

Basic principle is *First-come, first-served*

meaning that you have fixed number of topics and only such number of topics can be discussed (served)

# Methodology Basics

After *projects* (topics, themes...) have been defined, each *project owner* goes to her/his table and starts to work on *project* in cafe setup through 3 or 4 stages (3 or 4 cafe sessions, depending on available time).

Project owners stays at table, other people move around in cafe setup after each stage.

Each stage has specific question which "guides" discussion.

# Methodology Basics - Stage 1

Question to explore is:

## **WHAT IS THE QUEST BEHIND THIS PROJECT?**

Project owner presents purpose and context to 3 other people sitting at the table. They try to answer this question.

Session takes cca 30 - 40 minutes and then cca 10 minutes break.

**IMPORTANT:** during break, project owner reflects and digest previous discussion. It is also time for project owner to release energy.

# Methodology Basics - Stage 2

Question to explore is:

## **WHAT AM I MISSING?**

After break 3 new people come to table. Project owner shares context and together they try to answer the question. Session takes cca 30 - 40 minutes and then 20 minutes break.

**IMPORTANT:** this break is very important for project owner to contemplate around the quest and begin to answer next questions.

# Methodology Basics - Stage 3

Questions to explore are:

**WHAT AM I LEARNING?  
WHAT STEPS DO I NEED 2 TAKE?  
WHAT HELP DO I NEED?**

After break 3 new people come to table and they try to answer this questions. Goal is for CONVERSATION 2 BECOME ACTION.

After this session you can run 4th session for wrapping it all up, finalizing harvesting etc.

Comment: In AOH Zagreb we had 3 sessions.



# Methodology Basics - Harvesting

Harvesting usually takes place in circle.

Project owners are trying to have rigorous answer 2 their questions.

It could take 5 minutes per project owner, it's important for them to speak back 2 the circle. It could be sometimes just expression of gratitude, share of thoughts, learnings etc.

# What is this methodology good 4?

- Use it when rubber needs 2 hit the road!
- This is very converging form, so it is good for convergence phase, but can also stand on it's own.
- Could be fabulous way to organize business meetings, specifically if they need to create action plan with ownership.
- Methodology can scale from cca 15 people up to hundreds
- You can achieve workable results in just few hours

# What 2 be careful about?

- You need 2 be sure that participants are ready to give their best in order 2 create solutions
- You should have enough diversity - 15 people at least
- Requires some logistics organization, more than other technologies
- Potential vulnerability of project owners must be cared about!
- Judging = mortal sin of learning

# Comments, questions?

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