Detroit Facilitation Guild
Monday, June 18, 2012
6-7:30pm
Hosted by Amit Weitzer
Staff Meetings

Facilitator: Amit Weitzer
Guest Facilitator: Evan Major
Present: Jess Daniel, Jacob Stevens Corvidae, Joel Howrani Heeres, Sarah Coffey, Wayne Ramocan, Jennifer Young (note taker)

Materials needs: Copies of Agenda and handouts. Chips and Guacamole.

Objectives:

1. To define ambitious goals and learn how to align activities around them
2. To learn how to cultivate a meeting culture that values excellence and constant improvement
3. For people who facilitate staff meetings as managers or from other roles, to learn tools to facilitate more efficient and productive staff meetings and how to spread leadership.
4. For people who participate in staff meetings to have the tools to 'manage up' and positively affect the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings.
5. For participants to gain an appreciation for how the logistical considerations (temperature, food, space, wireless, computers) of a staff meeting affect productivity/mood/culture.

Meeting Agenda:

I.   Ice Breaker

II.   Introductions

III.   Discussion on Staff Meetings (see outline below)

IV.   Plus's and Deltas
        It was suggested that people share at the beginning of the meeting what are their experiences of being in staff meetings.

V.   Next Meeting:
        Date: Wednesday, July 18
        Time: 6:00 – 7:30 pm
        Host: Joel Howrani Heeres
        Facilitators: Sandra Yu and Sarah Coffey
        Topic: Models of Decision Making

1. Pre-Meeting Planning:
    a. Logistical Considerations
        i. Location - How to balance visual/multiple learning styles and interactive spaces with the space you have regular access to. (i.e. can't keep things on the wall after/shared room...)
        ii. Food - not loud food, soft foods. think about any dietary needs. no sense in alienating the vegan.
        iii. Skype/Tech needs. - test beforehand. make sure everything work, and be willing to nix it if it doesn't works.
    b. Sending agenda beforehand.
        i. Be thoughtful about asking participants to come to the meeting prepared. (reporting/questions/challenges.)
        ii. ***Don't be afraid of having an "ask" in the agenda or delegating parts of the agenda to other people - shared leadership.
            1. Possible methods for getting input:
        iii. Consider the meeting objectives
            1. What type of Staff meeting is it / Who is the audience?
                a. Is the meeting with staff within an organization? If so, how large is the organization? How frequently do staff interact with one another?
                b. Is the meeting with staff of multiple organizations? If so, what are the cultural differences and commonalities between the organizations?
                c. Are these staff members new to the organization? If so, is community building more of an objective than with other staff members.
                d. Fun off-sites
                e. Cross functional team meetings
                f. Regular standing meetings
                g. What is the environment in which the meeting occurs?
                    i. A time of major change? A regular update?
                    ii. Consider human needs such as ice breakers, food, child care
            2. Possible objectives:
                a. People experience that their time was well spent and each person gets something out of it for themselves
                b. Making sure all project team members are on the same page
                c. Building a sense of community
            3. Consider how to balance the tension between getting things done, valuing people's time and community building.
            4. Be transparent about objectives
    c. Tasks to Delegate

           i.   Assign Note-taker and share expectations for notes before the meeting.
          ii.   Schedule for note-takers.
        iii.   Facilitation of agenda items/ice-breakers..

2. Meeting Agenda - What should you always want to get out of a staff meeting?
    a. Thank people for their time.
    b. Ice-Breaker/Game: Building a culture of wanting to be together
        i. Share Ice-Breakers and Team-Builders
            1. The Question Game (Themed - meetings). Other suggestions - Build a list.
            2. Human Knot
            3. Communication Game – blindfold/bucket/item.
        ii. Share resources on the Google Doc.
    c. Check In – offer a prompt to go deeper than you would otherwise.
        i. The idea is to get everyone sharing.
        ii. Tools to use for probing - "Questions to Get Beneath the Surface" (see The Management Center)
        iii. Rose/Bud/Thorn
        iv. Example: Invite everyone to share one personal and one professional goal at the start of each meeting.
        v. 7 second rule: Ask, sit and wait for a response.
    d. Sharing goals for the meeting/timeline expectations.
        i. When you stick to timeline of an agenda, it sends participants a message that you value their time).
        ii. Hold time spent in meetings as sacred.
        iii. Evaluate how frequently you need to meet
            1. Examples: daily (e.g. Zingerman's staff meet at the start of every shift, however have flexibility), weekly, monthly, intermittent check-ins, quarterly, annually, etc.
    e. Following up on last meetings commitments/debriefing past business.
        i. Feedback loops
        ii. Reviewing task assignments: Task tracking and accountability
        iii. Review decisions made at previous meeting
        iv. Follow-through helpful
    f. The Business.
        i. Developing insight into what is relevant and what needs to go off-line and be discussed after the meeting.
    g. Check Out Activity:
        i. Collect input on agenda
        ii. Everyone goes around and says one thing they appreciate about one other person in the room (perhaps the person to their right or left.)
        iii. Schedule time after meeting

Challenges in staff meetings – Brainstorm tools for mitigating those challenges:
-    # of participants - How do you cultivate sense of community with large group?

- ***Tension between building community/regular meetings and meetings with very specific goals to get work done. Want to value everyone's time and build community...
- Technological Challenges
- Cultural Challenges
- Logistical tension between lots of visual aids and accessibility to learning styles and rotating locations/sharing a space with other organizations, space with limitations...
- Check-in's can be time consuming especially in a large group. Possible solution: Identify someone in the meeting you don't speak with every day and share with that person. This may also support people in being more likely to speak.
- Others?

Tools from Management Center to share:
- Mtg Structure template
- Questions to Get Beneath the Surface
- Delegation Worksheet:
- http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ccf/ccf_resources/leading_npo.pdf
- www.managementcenter.org