



FRAMEWORK FOR AFFINITY GROUP MEETINGS

Effectively running affinity group meetings presents a valuable opportunity to enhance member engagement and drive meaningful impact, especially in today's hybrid environments. A well-designed meeting framework can help affinity group leaders maximize this opportunity, fostering deeper connections, facilitating learning, and spurring action. By implementing the following 5-part structure, you can create more purposeful and effective affinity group meetings that align with your group's mission and goals while providing an engaging experience for all participants.

1. Celebrate and Connect (10-15 minutes):

- Begin with shout-outs for member accomplishments, both personal and professional.
- Use a "choreographed connection" question to align with the meeting's purpose or foster personal connections.
- Consider using breakout rooms for quick, rotating pair or small group discussions.
- Example: If the meeting topic is receiving difficult feedback, a choreographed connection question could be: "Share a time when you received difficult feedback but were able to bounce back from it, or think of an experience where you received really good feedback and what about it was helpful." This example directly ties the connection activity to the meeting's topic, allowing members to start reflecting on their personal experiences with feedback before diving into the main discussion.

2. Share Insights (15-20 minutes):

- Present information relevant to the group's goals or current initiatives.
- Invite guest speakers or members to share expertise on relevant topics.
- Present insights on career development topics, such as navigating unspoken rules for success within the organization.
- Consider rotating responsibility for this section among members to increase engagement and leadership opportunities.

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3. Reflect and Discuss (20-25 minutes):

- Facilitate small group discussions or breakout sessions to delve deeper into the shared insights.
- Encourage diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Use prompts that allow members to relate the topic to their personal experiences.
- When returning to the main group, ask representatives share key takeaways.

4. Action Planning (10-15 minutes):

- Identify concrete steps members can take based on the meeting's content.
- Discuss how insights can be applied within the organization.
- Assign responsibilities and set timelines for follow-up.
- Consider how actions align with the group's strategic plan and overall mission.

5. Close with Appreciation (5-10 minutes):

- End on a positive note by sharing key takeaways or "aha" moments.
- Express gratitude for participation and contributions.
- Briefly preview the next meeting's topic or upcoming events.
- Encourage members to share one action they plan to take before the next meeting.

Additional Considerations:

- Adjust the time allocated to each section based on your group's needs and the meeting's duration.
- Leverage virtual tools for remote or hybrid meetings to ensure inclusive participation across offices.
- Regularly collect feedback from members on the meeting structure and content to continually improve.
- Use this framework to balance connection-building with substantive discussions and action-oriented outcomes.
- Remember that not every meeting needs a formal program or external speaker; sometimes focusing on connection and shared experiences is valuable.

By following this structured approach, you'll create more impactful meetings that foster a sense of community, provide valuable insights, and drive meaningful action within your affinity group. This framework also helps ensure that your meetings align with the key purposes of affinity groups: connection, community-building, and career development.

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