

THE CO-LED MEETING¹

We traditionally see two types of drift in management team dynamics: excessive centralization on the part of the leader, who conducts the meeting, manages the time, calls for decisions, oversees the minutes, and literally carries his or her team; and, in response, a lack of engagement by that team, who becomes quick to criticize or complain about the group's dysfunction.

By implementing the co-led meeting process, the manager makes actors out of all of the attendees of a management meeting. He or she delegates four aspects of the leader's role: managing the team's dynamic, developing a mindset for making decisions and getting results, optimizing time management, and encouraging both personal and group learning experiences. The approval of the decisions that are made remains the leader's main role, which places that leader at the nexus of the system while promoting a consultative approach.

More than a meeting leadership technique, when incorporated into a context of change, the co-led meeting process can reveal far greater potential, enabling a business to transform its management culture.

LEADING A MEETING WITH THE CO-LED MEETING PROCESS: DELEGATED ROLES

1. The facilitator

The facilitator's function is to manage the team's energy during meetings. The best metaphor for this function is that of a conductor when he or she is conducting the collective expression of a musical group. He/she ensures that participants remain focused on the issue at hand, the prepared score. He/she makes sure that interfaces between participants are smooth, that interruptions remain limited, and that everyone finds and keeps his or her "right place".

2. The decision-driver

The decision-driver elicits and then records the decisions, whose content is laid out by the team, and subject to explicit approval by the leader. This role acts as a form of "punctuation" that pushes the group to make one decision after another. It allows a team to formalize the commitments made at the meeting.

It is, above all, by a process of clear decision-making with good follow-up that an organization stays its course.

3. The regulator

The regulator helps the team keep its rhythm in each of the working time periods it is allowed. This function lets the entire team remain totally focused on the issue for the entire work period and thereby avoid wasted time at the beginning or in the middle, which can result in production pressure, breakup, or going overtime at the end.

¹ Inspired by our experience and the implementation of the "delegated meeting" developed by Alain Cardon in *Coaching d'équipe* [Team Coaching].

4. The observer or meta

The observer or “meta” is in charge of identifying processes that are ongoing and would have an impact on the meeting’s performance. This service, focused on future options, often requires training, and calls on coaching skills that are often unknown to, or not practiced by, many managers.

The long-term goal of this role is to teach managers how to apply it naturally and daily with the people around them and, especially, the people they supervise. The first outcome is to improve meeting performance and develop a culture of continuous learning.

THE ADVANTAGES OF ITS IMPLEMENTATION

1) Get all actors involved in the meeting

The co-led meeting makes meetings more productive. A great many managers, tired of ineffective meetings, would rather handle problems with two or three people in the context of a more easily-managed relationship, which, paradoxically, impoverishes the team. In the co-led meeting process, each person contributes to creating value. This team responsibility takes priority over the responsibility of the subject matter expert, and, at the same time, promotes individual recognition.

2) Developing cross-functional cooperation

The co-led meeting process is designed to change interactions between people rather than attempt to change the people themselves. Therefore, it is focused on relationships rather than personalities, and on interfaces rather than entities such as units, departments, territories, or types of expertise.

3) Building a culture of delegation

Once it has been introduced into a team (especially if that team is key to the organization, such as a management committee), the co-led meeting process can spread, by word of mouth and by imitation, throughout the organization, and have a positive influence on the way all meetings are led.

4) Improving the quality of decisions made and their implementation

Because it focuses the team on its key goals – to arbitrate and decide – the co-led meeting process ensures that decisions made are not challenged, and that they are implemented more quickly.

5) Saving time and improving process flow

This collective process facilitates cross-functional teamwork, information circulation, cooperation, responsibility, and delegation, all of which are required for collective commitment to the organization’s results.

CONCLUSION: THE LEARNING COMPANY

Every role, and their rotation among members, develop a precise framework for a “learning company” and make it possible to experience and model, for the entire organization, four key leadership skills.



As roles are circulated, participants “instinctively” learn by experiencing and modeling. This learning is very useful for them in any situation in which they have a leadership role - or are a team member.

We have found that when it is well implemented, the co-led meeting process has an almost immediate impact on the outcomes of a meeting. The team makes its decisions more quickly, and follow up is better as far as their implementation is concerned. Many teams have been able to get a rapid and measurable benefit from this.

For a comprehensive description of the delegated roles and how to implement them, go to our *modeling area* at www.trajectories.com