

FACILITATION TECHNIQUE	Action Plan Workshop: the arrow
CORE PURPOSE / FOCUS	#define intentions #group prioritization #goal setting #discuss challenges #perspective #vision
PHASE	#action #opening #closing #review
SKILL / CONTENT	#big picture #creativity #evaluation #introspection #communication #empathy
TIME FRAME IN MINUTES	#>60 #60-120 #>120
GROUP SIZE IN PERSONS	#1-5 #6-15 #16-30 #<30
FACILITATION LEVEL	Skilled
COMFORT ZONE	Stretch

Introduction

This workshop aims to help participants define, decide and achieve their goals. By supporting participants to envision where they want to be in a number of years on a holistic level, and defining the steps that will take them there, participants get a clearer picture of the action they need to take.

Necessary tools (what you need)

- Pick an online whiteboard tool that allows using large, zooming able canvas.
- Use a video conferencing tool where you can assign the pair of participants into breakout rooms (e.g. Zoom).

Steps

1. Participants work in pairs. Each participant has an online whiteboard with the arrow model drawn largely on it. Either prepare these in advance or have participants quickly draw the model themselves. Introduce the session. Explain that the aim is to help participants create a vision of the future and to set very tangible actions for how to move toward that vision. In pairs, participants will interview each other. First person A will interview person B, covering all the steps, then they will switch.
2. Brief the participants about the first interview, then assign the participants to the breakout rooms:

Ask all participants to close their eyes and visualize their life in 1 year (or another time horizon, see facilitator notes below.) Ask them to explore this future vision. Guide them with questions like:

- *Who are you with? Who is around you?*
- *What have you achieved that you are proud of?*
- *What are you working on?*
- *How do you spend your day?*
- *How do you spend your free time? – etc.*

Tailor these questions to the group you are working with and their particular context. After the visualization, all participants draw their vision on point 1 on their flip-chart. By drawing, participants make their vision tangible without focusing too much on the details. After drawing, person A begins interviewing person B.

3. Participants come back to the main video conference and get the briefing about the next part. Then assign the participants to the breakout rooms:

Person A interviews person B. First, the interviewer asks their partner to imagine the key factors that supported the vision to be realized. Remind participants to speak as if they are looking back, describing what helped them realize their vision. They should move back in time from the vision back toward the present day. It could be things like, *"I got really good help from my mentor," "I started to work out regularly," "I hired an accountant"* or *"I faced my fear of failure."* Anything that had a positive effect on achieving the vision. During this step, the interviewer writes down each key factor on a post-it note and placing it at point 2 on the whiteboard of their partner.

4. Participants come back to the main video conference and get the briefing about the next part. Then assign the participants to the breakout rooms:

Next, the interviewer asks their partner to identify three hindering factors that almost made me fail.

These factors are the things almost made them give up and not realize their vision. This could be, *"I overslept and showed up late a lot," "At first I didn't dare to quit my job to start something new"* or *"I almost didn't tell the person I liked that I had a crush on him."* Again, the interviewer writes these down on post-its and puts them at point 3 on the model.

The interviewer continues asking about the three hindering factors, but shifts focus to what the person did to overcome them. For instance, *"I had a friend call and wake me up every morning," "I trained in a new skill and it led to my new dream job."* The interviewer writes these solutions on post-its and attaches them to the problems on the model.

5. Participants come back to the main video conference and get the briefing about the next part. Then assign the participants to the breakout rooms:

Finally, the interviewer asks their partner to consider steps they have already taken toward their vision. They might say, *"I signed up for this course," or "I've started training in this new skill."* The dotted line represents today and the interviewer writes and adds these post-its to point 4 on the model.

After the first interview is complete, the partners switch and repeat the process.

6. Participants come back to the main video conference: Each participant's arrow is now full of post-its representing tasks in an action plan to achieve the vision. Whether the time horizon is 3 months or 3 years, the arrow represents a realistic path to get there.

Encourage participants to keep their arrow and even to post it somewhere where they will see it and draw inspiration from it. End the session with a check-out where each participant shares the next action they will take toward their vision.

Tips & Tricks

- If you do not have an online whiteboard tool, you can use Slack or Google docs to share and comment on the created images.
- If using video conferencing software alone, invite the participants to share their screen and show their digital image, or hold up their physical drawing for the group to see.

Source

<http://toolbox.hyperisland.com>

