



Best Path Forward

Duration: 30-45 minutes

Group size: individuals

Purpose

This activity offers participants the chance to assign their personal 'value' to each design idea, resulting in a prioritized list that reflects the group's shared values. The intention is to choose the best potential path forward from an array of identified opportunities.

Outputs

- A prioritized ranking of design options that reflects the group's combined tally of individual judgments.

Preparation

- Pre-populate and print Best Path Forward worksheets for each participant.

Materials:

- ✓ Best Path Forward worksheets
- ✓ Pens

Guidelines

- Give each participant a pre-filled Best Path Forward worksheet and pen. Read the items on the list, checking everyone understands each item.
- Encourage participants to work alone and honestly express their personal judgment of the importance of each item.
- Each participant is assigned 20 points which they should distribute among the items. They must assign 0, 1, 2, or 3 points (maximum) to indicate the importance of each item. (You should lower the number of points for a shorter list of items to force prioritization.)
- Allow approximately 20 minutes to assign points to the items but adjust if participants need more or less time to finish. The amount of time will vary depending on the number of items.
- Collect the lists from each participant and tally the scores on the Best Path Forward Ranking sheet.
- Assign ranking based on the total points for each item. Use this score to determine the group's prioritization of the items, with the highest scoring item being most important.

- Report and discuss the results with the full group. If there is a consensus that the results are skewed, make appropriate adjustments. This session should close with participants in general agreement to move forward in the direction of the collectively agreed priorities.

Tips for facilitating group activities

- Consider changing the usual meeting environment to stimulate creative thinking.
- Keep the end goal of decisive action in mind for the duration of the activity.
- Open with a brief overview of the activity so participants know what to expect.
- Be careful and consistent to maintain pre-set boundaries of time and task.
- Encourage small group self-management; suggest that each group select a recorder, a reporter, a time keeper, and a discussion leader.
- Work with the people, ideas, and motivations you have to find enough common ground to act rather than being bogged down or sidetracked with an attempt to resolve “deeper issues”.
- Seek global perspective on issues by allowing all opinions to be expressed, validating polarities, and by agreeing to disagree on issues that cannot be resolved quickly.
- Encourage people to stay engaged in spite of differences. Resist the urge to intervene unless you observe movement toward ‘fight or flight’. Allow the group to resolve its own differences or agree to set them aside.
- Provide plenty of easily available nutritious snacks and beverages
- Consider using a Church Futures consultant to add depth and breadth of experience.

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