

Purpose Workshop

What

Purpose is the central to the development of any groups mission, vision, and products and services. The Purpose Workshop is a simple technique to engage a group in discussing and defining their purpose as a group or organization.

When

It is used any time a group questions what they are suppose to be doing and as an initial exercise when developing a strategic plan..

How

- 1. Invite the right people:** This method assumes that the people that show up are the right people to make the decision. Therefore people that are invited are very important to the success of the results.
- 2. Create the Focus Question:** The workshop is initiated with a Focus Question that has the group identify what they believe their purpose is. Ex: Why was our group/organization created? What is our purpose? What purpose were we created to fulfill?
- 3. Brainstorm Purpose:** Start the group by defining purpose. We suggest that purpose is a simple statement of the reason that a group was created. It is a statement that is broad and generally derived from enabling legislation and legislative history, or statements of the founding individuals as to why it was necessary to create the group. The simpler and more specific the better. Present the focus question and ask the group to write down their ideas.
- 4. Share Ideas in Small Groups:** In groups of 3 to 5 people, write all the ideas on cards using a verb/noun technique or by completing the phrase, "We exist to..." using no more than 8 words and share your ideas. Combine duplicates and select the best ones present.
- 5. Post Initial Ideas:** In a large group the Facilitator starts by requesting cards, 1 to 2 at a time, by asking for the broadest, clearest, most challenging.) Pair up similar ideas. After 3 to 5 pairs are identified have the participants add the rest of the ideas to the pairs.
- 6. Organize and Name:** Organize the groups, largest left to smallest right, and name the groups using a 3 to 5 word verb/noun name. Select the column and ask, "What do you see as an overall purpose here? Are there subordinate or secondary purposes?"

Focus Question: What purpose were we created to fulfill?				
Super Purpose 😊				
Cluster Purpose ◆	Cluster Purpose 😊	Cluster Purpose ◆	Cluster Purpose □	Cluster Purpose ○
Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea
Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea
Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	
Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea		
Purpose Idea	Purpose Idea			
Purpose Idea				

- 7. Reflect on the Results:** Read the column titles. Ask, "Which is the most exciting for you?" "Which will be the hardest?"
- 8. String Together the Purpose:** Ask the group to select cluster purpose names to string together to create a single common purpose statement.