

Using Knowledge Cafes to stimulate productive conversations

Description

The place of conversation in the workplace is often neglected. How often do you find that in meetings, at workshops and conferences and in dealing with knotty issues you end up in debates or in positional exchanges rather than having productive dialogues.

You know that you would like more in-depth conversations about what really matters but somehow it doesn't happen.

The solutions and insights needed to address many of the complex issues we face often exist. It is just that our current methods of talk don't always work.

"The kind of conversation I'm interested in is one in which you start with a willingness to emerge a slightly different person." Theodore Zeldin

What is a Knowledge Café

Knowledge cafes were pioneered by David Gurteen in the UK. A knowledge café brings a group of people together to have an open, creative conversation on a topic of mutual interest. As a structured process it surfaces a groups collective knowledge, allows ideas to be shared and a deeper understanding of the issues involved to be developed.

Ultimately this can result in better decision-making and innovation and thus tangible business outcomes.

Benefits

There are many benefits

- A deeper understanding of the issue discussed
- A deeper insight into other people's perspectives
- A better appreciation of your own point of view
- Being in a better position to take informed action
- A shift from debate to dialogue and constructive conversations

Options

1. Learn how to run a Knowledge Café

A 3 hour workshop for groups. Learn the method and then experience a Knowledge Café. Leave skilled to run a Knowledge Café yourself.

2. Include a Knowledge Café in your next conference, day out or training event

You have seen it; the question time following a keynote or a plenary discussion following a small group discussion with the same people dominating. Knowledge Cafes can be a very effective way to get all participants involved.

3. Use a Knowledge Café to structure the discussion of a tricky issue in your organisation

A Knowledge Café can be an effective means for getting people talking about difficult issues and generating new insights and solutions.

"Conversation is a meeting of minds with different memories and habits. When minds meet, they don't just exchange facts: they transform them, reshape them, draw different implications from them, engage in new trains of thought. Conversation doesn't just reshuffle the cards: it creates new cards." Theodore Zeldin

Presenter

Geoff Pearman is an experienced manager, facilitator and adult educator. He has trained with David Gurteen and run knowledge cafes with both small and large groups at conferences, in cross cultural settings requiring a translator, in training workshops and in planning and policy development contexts.



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