

Planning Participatory Staff Meetings

Conventional staff meetings often take the form of a presentation. Someone—typically a person in a position of leadership—presents information while the rest of the group listens. Or, selected employees may take turns presenting updates. Others may have an opportunity to share in an “open comment” format, but usually play a limited or passive role.

Participatory staff meetings

Participatory staff meetings, on the other hand, offer ample opportunities for employees to provide input and to help influence the way decisions are made. In participatory meetings, staff members are asked to help plan events, direct programming and share in the creation of next steps. Although library leadership still retains the final say in terms of decision making, staff members are able to contribute to the process in a meaningful way.

During participatory meetings, staff members are:

- Able to share through dialogue and collaboration
- Given opportunities to provide meaningful input
- Encouraged to help generate solutions to problems or new paths forward
- Responsible for co-planning and co-directing certain activities/programs

Questions to consider

How participatory is our typical staff meeting?

What are we going to ask staff members to be responsible for?

How will we record staff ideas and input?



Capturing staff input

Remember that input can be captured in many different ways. Determine what combination of the following is best for your staff culture:



- Easel sheets
- Table paper
- Voting (sticker voting or highlighting)
- Short feedback form



Planning Steps:

1. Establish clear baseline information (key facts) that will help everyone to participate
2. Create a well thought out question for the group to discuss
3. Use a meeting format that encourages dialogue and small-group discussion
4. Capture shared learning and any agreements through notes, easel sheets, post-it notes or a shared electronic platform
5. Solicit feedback through a short questionnaire

How can staff contribute?

Participatory Examples:

- Staff members **provide input** on an upcoming training.
- Staff members **share themes** from patron input
- Staff members **generate ideas** for the library's annual summer reading program.
- Staff members **help plan** marketing of a new makerspace.
- Staff members **recommend** the best way to spend grant funding.