

Three Tips for Meetings That Sizzle

Beginning, Middle, and End

For energizing and productive meetings, pay attention to each beginning, middle, and end. Liberal use of rounds makes the difference. In a round, each person speaks in turn, with no “popcorn” discussion. Anyone has the option to pass in any round without pressure. Here’s how to use a round in each part.

➤ **Beginning:**

Start the meeting with an opening round. Each person in turn says how s/he is doing and makes any requests for the meeting.

An opening round gets people connected and generates energy, leading to a more productive meeting.

➤ **Middle:**

A round is useful for many agenda items. It can be to generate ideas about a sticky topic, ask clarifying questions about a presentation or a proposal, or give a quick reaction to a proposal.

A round in the middle gives everyone a voice, and brings out creative ideas.

➤ **End:**

Evaluate the meeting and the facilitation with a closing round. Each person in turn says what went well in the meeting and offers suggestions for improvement.

A closing round keeps people connected at the end and provides feedback on the meeting so that the group can keep improving.

If you are new to using rounds, you may think, “How could we ever make the time for that?” The paradox is that rounds *save* time. Creative ideas surface sooner, people listen more generously since they know they will also have a turn, and quiet people can hold as much sway in the meeting as the vocal ones. Everyone relaxes as they get more experience with the process and grow to trust it. The new ideas, the productivity, and the connections among the participants leave people energized!



References:

- John Buck and Gerard Endenburg, [The Creative Forces of Self-Organization](#), 2012 (article).
- Nancy Kline, *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*, 1999 (book).
- Sheella Mierson, [5 Pitfalls of a Top-Down Hierarchy and What to Do About Them](#), 2019 (article).
- Sheella Mierson, [ABC's of \(Virtual\) Meetings that Rock](#), 2019 (article).

For more about how we can add sizzle to your meetings and to your business, organization, or group, visit sociocracyconsulting.com.

