

The Check-in



Try this meeting tip at your next meeting to increase the quality of your conversation.

What It Is:

- A facilitation method to be used at the start of every meeting to change the quality of the energy and conversation during the meeting.

What It Does:

- Helps participants leave distractions at the door
- Gets everyone's voice in the room right at the start, which sets a tone for collaboration and safety
- Creates a level of understanding of where everyone is, where the energy is and a pulse on the collective mindset.

How To Do It:

- Have a check in question(s) ready before the meeting.
- At the very beginning of the meeting, before you get to the agenda items, ask everyone to "check in" by going around the room and responding to a pre-determined question.
- Ask the question, give everyone a second to think about it, and ask anyone to start. You may go in order of seating, or just randomly. (I like random, gives introverts time to think and lets people decide to go when they're comfortable.)
- When you have completed the check in, start the meeting

Do's & Don'ts

- **DON'T** respond to anyone's check in. This purpose is solely for people to let others know where they're at, and what's on their mind. If people respond, the check in will take too long and/or people might feel like they need to be "fixed" if they share something that's wrong or challenging for them.
- **DO** set ground rules for check in - share these do's and don'ts with everyone before you do a check in and ask everyone to be mindful.
- **DO** put a time limit to the check in. Depending on how much time you have for the meeting, keep it shorter or give it more time. If it's an hour meeting, you might ask everyone to just check in with a "word" or one sentence that describes how they're feeling or what they're thinking. If you have more time, you may ask everyone to spend just a few minutes checking in.
- **DO:** Encourage the group to listen to the tone of the check-in vs. the actual words. What is the collective energy/tone that is being expressed?
- If you're a manager or leader, **DO** take special note of your members. How is the group doing? Is there a pattern over time that might need to be addressed?
- Most importantly: **NO JUDGMENT, NO PUNISHMENT.** If you're reading this, it means you're interested in creating a more collaborative, engaging environment. The best way to kill that is for someone to judge another during check in, have an apparent strong reaction, or bring up the check in at a later day with negative tones or consequences.

Great Questions for Check Ins:

1. How are you doing, personally and professionally? - this is my all time fave, it's simple and just gets to the heart of it. This is the one I use most.
2. What's giving you energy right now, what's draining your energy right now?
3. What's on your mind lately?
4. What's been good about work lately and would could be better?
5. If we knew we would not fail, what should this team attempt to do?
6. If you knew you would not fail, what would you attempt to do?
7. Name a time you felt most successful and fulfilled at this organization.
8. What have you learned about yourself in the last 3-6 months?
9. What are you looking forward to most?
10. When are you at your absolute best?

There are many ways to enhance the check in when you have multiple day meetings or special circumstances, like trust issues, low energy, new members, etc. I'm happy to help you work with those situations. Just give me a ring!