



START Conversations

Talking about what matters most

START Conversations – Facilitator's Notes

As the facilitator your role is to TALK AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.

ASK QUESTIONS if the conversation isn't picking up

The Process:

Welcome everyone & give a brief intro to yourself as well as to the intent & purpose of START Conversations

What you could say: Conversations are essential to business, teamwork, being futurefit and yet they often don't happen...well. Leaders tell instead of asking and so Start Conversations is an attempt to help leaders host good and meaningful conversations with their teams. This resource has emerged from our global experience of seeing first-hand the need for the 'right' conversations.

EXPLAIN THE PROCESS OF S-T-A-R-T

S - SEE – I will put up an *image* (a picture tells a 1000 words)

T - THINK – I will then put up a *quote* (silent reflection for a couple of minutes. It might seem like an age but silence / reflection is important. Jot down any thoughts, associations, questions that come to mind as you pause and think about the quote)

A - ASK – I will then put up a *question* that ties the image & quote together (The mind works best in the presence of a question. Good questions are essential to finding good solutions or ways forward. After a short pause to absorb the question we will then begin our discussion...)

R - RESPOND – The *discussion* takes place (I will be the gatekeeper from a time perspective, so don't worry about that aspect)

T - TAKE-OUT – *Wrap-up* the conversation by asking what the team 'takes-out' from the last 20 minutes. Would be good to ensure that each person shares.

This brief wrap-up could be to explore both some positive ACTION each person commits to as a 'further step' as well as to explore what the actual START PROCESS was like ("What has this conversation been like for you?"). It would be OK for people to share it felt awkward, or slightly artificial etc...and if this is the case then ask what could be done to make it less so next time as well as explain that 'we will get better at doing this and so needs to persevere given the benefits).

CLARIFY YOUR ROLE

(This bit could also be incorporated in the welcome but I would think it fits best after you have explained START and means you keep the 'welcome' to explain more of the intent & purpose of START)

What you could say: I am here today as a Facilitator to help initiate the SC process. I will say very little but might prompt from time-to-time or offer some observations. I will monitor the time and ensure we keep to the time limit we agree too. Thank you for allowing me to serve you in this way and the idea is that you will pick-it up and run with future SC without me being here. Relax and enjoy this time. There is no hidden agenda other than to build the capacity for us to have important conversations that prompt further action either individually or collectively – that will be your call.

SET TIME FRAME

This might have already been pre-arranged. 20-30 minutes would be about right. Rather stop it when there is energy and people want more time than let the process run out of steam. You may want to negotiate upfront with the leaders if you can make use of a discretionary 5 additional minutes should the conversation be such that you don't want to interrupt it. Remember this is their process and so if come 30minutes, they all agree that they wish to carry-on, which is great. Just agree for how long so that you can then call it a day and hold the process together as a facilitator. Part of this learning is how to have short, powerful conversations and so watch for any one person dominating and if appropriate, this could be highlighted in your wrap-up as you share some process observations.

YOU ARE NOW READY TO CLICK #1 (Image)

NOTES:

Things to observe:

- Who speaks, who doesn't – why might that be?
- When is energy in the room high / low – what was being discussed at that point
- Who asks questions or takes the conversation deeper
- Depth of sharing. What the conversation edgy, safe, guarded, routine...?
- What role does the team leader play (might offer your observations to him/her in private afterwards)
- What seems to be the team dynamic?
- When someone talks who do they look at? Do people always reference the leader?
- Observe the body language

Take care to **set-up the room** in a manner that is suited to conversation. Venue is important. Would help for people to get coffee at the outset and maybe have something to snack on without this being a distraction. This can be discussed with the leader beforehand. The leader should introduce you (this is important) and state why they have decided to pursue START. This gives the process the right base from which to launch – it is important for the team to hear their leader say “I think this is important”.

Try to make a point of a brief connection to everyone before you start (assuming this is the first thing on their agenda). Learn names. They all know each other and you are stepping into a team dynamic that is unfamiliar – the leader might have shared some team insights with you beforehand. These details are important in the process.

You will set the tone upfront. Relax, be clear, open...be yourself.