



Academy of Culture Ambassadors

Advocates for workplace team transparency and trust.

A 501(c)(3) Corporation

A White Paper

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TEAMS GET IT SOFTWARE

It is natural thinking to use surveys to support decisions that involve human opinions. But the usual survey tools have some shortcomings. The big one is that they *do not allow for individual team member inputs/weights to be transparent and vetted*. Instead, they pool and average the data for all participants combined. Data from individual contributors is lost and there is no way to vet individual contributor opinions and discover potentially important “why’s”. Discovering those underlying “why’s” can only be accomplished when contributor input is not anonymous. That is how the Academy’s Teams Get It software works. Usual survey tools even tout the importance of anonymity which is a contradiction to modern team emphasis on open and honest communication.

There seems to be endless decision support applications for teams such as workplace practices; values; project selection; engagement; diversity; branding; hiring; customer input; product features; idea management; marketing strategy; benefits; events; and market research.

The software may be seen as a flexible and easy to use survey tool. But more correctly it is an easy to use and flexible tool for collaborative Team Decision Support.

Below are set up data for three examples. There are many possible examples in a company ranging from preparing contents for meeting agendas to project budgeting. Nothing is pre determined. The user decides upon survey elements and decision criteria.

Because the Teams Get It software is so easy and intuitive to use, technical or learning concerns are not a barrier. A customers Team Admin simply emails the Academy their survey elements and decision criteria. In a few minutes they receive back a link to distribute to team members inviting them to log in and participate. All registered Team Members have access to all input and output for a session. The TA can click a delete icon at any time to delete a session.

Possible set up elements for gathering data about team workplace practices: The Decision Variables might be those listed and the Decision Criteria might be (1) importance to me and (2) achievement by the team.

1. We trust each other.
2. We have the backs of each other.
3. We are recognized for contributions.
4. We teach, coach, and mentor each other.
5. We enjoy social times with each other.
6. We openly and honestly share opinions.
7. We respect each other.
8. We function as a democracy.
9. We have the needed mix of skills.
10. We practice being prudent.

Possible set up elements for gathering data for hiring: The Decision Variables might be those shown and the Decision Criteria might be (1) importance for the position (2) evidence of achievement.

1. Fit with our culture.
2. Skills.
3. Communication.
4. Native Intelligence.
5. Creativity.
6. Past employment positions.
7. Past employers.
8. Formal education.
9. Glowing references.

Possible set up elements for gathering data about employee engagement: The Decision Variables might be those shown and the Decision Criteria might be (1) importance to me and (2) how I think other employees feel.

1. We have the tools and resources needed to do what is expected.
2. Employees are valued by management.
3. We receive the training needed.
4. Work is equitably assigned.
5. Salaries are equitable for the locale.
6. Vision and values for the organization are well understood.
7. Opportunities for personal professional growth are good.
8. Employee input, feedback, and suggestions are sought by managers.
9. I would recommend the company to friends.
10. Friendships among team members is obvious.
11. Managers know names and some personal interests of employees.

This is an example of showing results from a Teams Get It survey. Notice the chart axis names are Importance to Me and Degree of Achievement. Each dot in the chart represents one or more data points. Click on a data point and it shows who contributed that and what was the data. Note in the left-hand column are options for selecting what data to see.

After finishing data collection and some time for team members to digest the results, the team gathers to discuss the findings. Outcomes might be change suggestions for a team member or the group as a whole, a different set of elements for collecting a different set of data, a date to take another survey, or become advocates for using the software for other groups in the company.

ARRIVING AT THE ELEMENTS FOR TEAMS GET IT SETUP

Arriving at Decision Variable and Decision Criteria (survey elements) for data gathering is important. If doing a routine employee engagement survey, selecting element from a vendor's data base or from a Google search is probably just fine. For more special situations such as team behaviors, unique elements derived by the team itself is preferred.

One way to arrive at the elements for surveys is to use a group brainstorming process called World Cafe. It is simple and always works. There are many tutorials for how to use the process but here is a simple version. The Academy has a free 42-page document with more details.

A group is divided into groups of about 5 persons per table. A World Cafe facilitator explains the task at hand and the process. Then each table group brainstorms for ideas for about 15 – 20 minutes. A person at a table writes what are their best ideas on sticky post it notes. Then they change tables leaving one person behind to serve as table captain and summarize the previous groups discussion. The process continues for 3-4 cycles depending upon number of participants. After finished brainstorming, the post it notes are put on a wall for voting. This is followed by discussion and finally a group consensus on a list of selected elements.

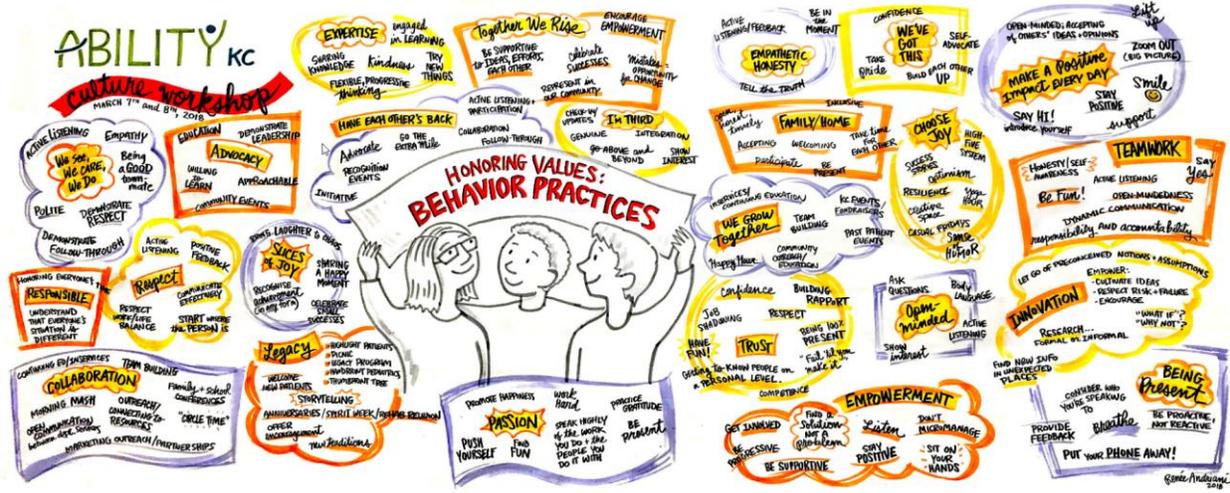
This description of the process is overly simplified but the process is simple, elegant, and always works. A key for success is having a qualified group facilitator.

VISUALIZING THE ELEMENT DISCOVERY PROCESS

We know that pictures have greater lasting memory than the usual notes or meeting minutes. During facilitated engagements to arrive at survey elements, such visuals can be captured in pictures and words by a professional Graphic Recorder. On large sheets of paper, the entire meeting event is captured as an artifact to be kept as a reference, teaching material, or hung on an office wall to impress visitors. The process itself is like magic happening in real time with exceptional participant attention and participation.

Although optional, the value of the Graphic Recorder's involvement during the meeting time and the ending artifact are likely to be worth many times the added cost.

This is an example by one of our Graphic Recorders with client Ability KC:



The following is an example graphic done by one of our Graphic Recorders to describe the Academy's vision:



THE WORKPLACE WISDOM RETREAT

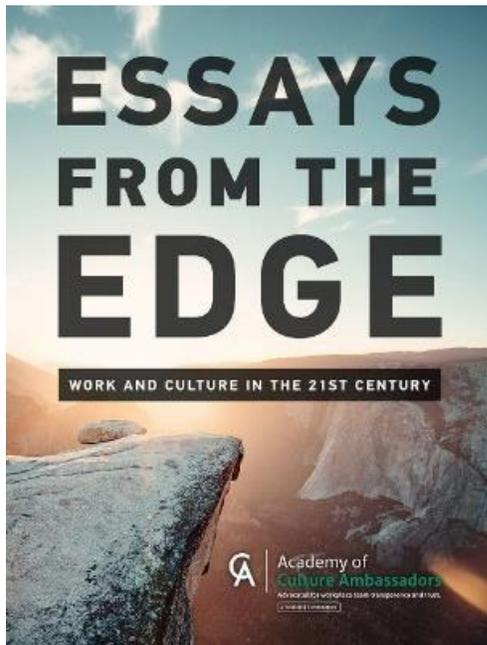
The fourth annual retreat will be held on September 21-23 in Omaha, Nebraska.

Magic just happens at the retreats. There aren't words to express the chemistry and spirit of those attending. The retreat has established itself as the friendliest and the most engaging, interactive, and useful conference on organizational culture. With only 48 participants including speakers, we are like a boutique hotel – small, personal and intimate.

And, we see to it that everyone leaves with specific workplace culture ideas to present and test back home.

For lot's more details check this out. cultureambassadorsretreat.com

THE ACADEMY'S NEW BOOK



The Academy's book will be entitled "***Essays from the Edge: Work and Culture in the 21st Century***". It has 25 chapters authored by Academy friends. *The authors wrote intentionally spiky and no-nonsense opinions* about workplace culture practices for the 21st Century. Watch for the books release in the first quarter of 2020.

The book will be in black and white and affordable. There won't be color to dazzle you. But the content will.

If you would like to write a chapter for the next book, send Jerry Wagner about 200 words that would be like an excerpt from a chapter that you would write.

FOLLOW-UP

We love to share ideas and opinions. You can [ask anything you wish](#) about the Academy. Jerry will send you a prompt and private answer.