



What are you doing differently? Are you celebrating your team and their accomplishments in some type of fun, creative fashion this season? If you want to achieve extraordinary results in the New Year, what will you do to get there? I hope you are taking a step back to debrief the challenges and lessons of 2021 to produce an even better 2022. Cheers, and thank you for your readership and support!

Kristin

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CREATIVE IDEAS TO CELEBRATE TEAM PERFORMANCE

A team is a group of individuals...and you must recognize each person's contributions to the team's overall success. Many teams choose to do that in the form of a holiday party, or with monetary appreciation at the end of the year. While money is a powerful motivator, there are even more thoughtful things you can do, large and small, that can recognize team members.

Visibility. Provide opportunities for team members to be visible within the organization (e.g. presenting papers, project results, management briefings). Include members' names on team deliverables such as reports or presentations.

Ongoing Development. Provide developmental opportunities to team members, such as training programs and special assignments. Support their involvement in industry or professional conferences. Encourage them to visit other companies to share the learnings and results of their work. Provide reasonable time off and/or pay tuition for degree or certification programs.

Environment. Provide state of the art and/or comfortable equipment and flexible working conditions.

Team Photos. Take team photographs. Post them on the bulletin board or publish them in the company newsletter or industry and trade journals.

Thank You Notes. In this age of electronics, an unexpected personal thank you note works wonders. At the minimum, write a formal letter to every team member at the conclusion of the project.

Small Gifts. Send flowers, a gift basket, tickets to a movie or some small token to team members who have been working long hours, traveling excessively, or who you have caught doing something right.

Celebrate. Pizza party, ice skating, bowling, or the U-Name-It event at the completion of the project as well as important milestones along the way. If you are working remotely, do a virtual happy hour.

Here are some ideas:

Bring in a bottle of non-alcoholic champagne and glasses (plastic will do, but it's a lot more fun with glass!), or ship the supplies to your team members for a virtual toast. Start the toast with "I am thankful this team is....." Clink glasses, take a sip and encourage others to continue the toast!

Have each team member share his or her most **memorable team moment**.

Have a potluck lunch. Encourage team members to stay and mingle rather than run back to the office or back home.

Have team members share what they think is the team's **most significant accomplishment** and what contributed to its success.

Share what each individual does to **celebrate success** (such as go out to dinner) and then agree on how the team will celebrate its success.

Bring in a Polaroid camera and **take team pictures**.

Have all the team members **sit in a circle**. Take a big ball of yarn and wrap one end around your finger. Throw the ball to another team member and thank that person for a specific contribution or accomplishment. That team member then wraps a bit of yarn around his or her finger and continues the process. You can even send it back to the same person! Watch the interconnected web the team weaves....

Go for a **brisk team walk** in the afternoon cool air and return to a mug of simmering hot apple cider. Do a walk-meeting conference call if necessary.

Share **what you gained** from working on the team and what are you thankful for learning.

Your best opportunity to recognize individual contributions and relationships is at the beginning of each team meeting. As you start, draw attention to roles and functions and the intended relationships between them. Some ideas to consider:

You're Special. Send the signal that each team member is special and has a valuable position on the team. Provide a copy of the agenda in a special folder with team member names. Prepare name tents bearing names and team roles. Ask members to stand and introduce themselves.

Hear Ye. Hear Ye. As team members introduce themselves, ask them to share their roles, functions, team stories or other noteworthy contributions.

Check In. Ask team members if anyone has anything of interest to share or to recognize other team members for their contributions since the last time you met.

Team Activities. Icebreakers are great ways to jump-start a meeting. They are lively, fun and interactive. Share the role of leading the team through a new icebreaker. Have fun with the activity and with the leader. At the conclusion, don't forget to thank team members for setting a positive tone for the rest of the meeting. By allowing a different team member to lead the team activity, they are visibly contributing to the team.

Tap Into Their WIIFM. Each person comes to the team with their own agenda or WIIFM (What's In It For Me). As a group, take the time to answer the question (WIIFM) for each team member. (Hint: With Generation X and Y teams, this form of recognition is a must.)

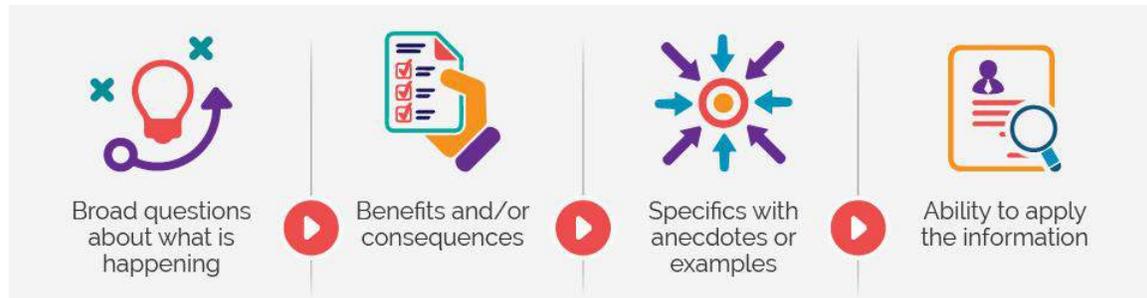
Pop In. Have the sponsor or champion “pop in” to a team meeting and actually know what the team is doing and how it is contributing to the organization’s success. Better yet, brief the champion with specifics about how each team member has contributed to the team’s success. Coach the champion to express appreciation for each person’s involvement and team success.

Thank ‘Em. As you kick off the meeting, remember to thank team members for their contributions since the last time you met. Rather than read a list, weave your compliments into the conversation. When team members offer an idea or suggestion, thank them for their initiative and contribution. The key is to be consistent in your recognition as well as authentic and genuine in your thanks.

30 DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PANEL QUESTIONS TO SPARK MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION

I received a comment on a recent blog post asking about diversity and inclusion panel questions. While the topic of “diversity and inclusion” (D&I) is rather broad, I was delighted that this commenter had a clear objective within the context of diversity and inclusion to ensure that “all students are prepared for and being safe in our schools.” I’m not as clear about the audience (students and/or stakeholders?) nor do I know about the panelists (let’s hope the panelists represent the diversity within the school district). All of which will contribute to the selection, flow, and sequence of the questions!

So, given a diversity and inclusion panel can go in a variety of directions, here are my top 30 potential diversity and inclusion panel questions. You will not ask them all, but perhaps they might provide some inspiration as you develop your own list.



Generally speaking, I like to follow this flow to sequence the questions from strategic to tactical.

Diversity and Inclusion Panel Questions

1. What is your definition of diversity? What does it mean to you?
2. What is your definition of inclusion? What does it mean to you?
3. Why now? Why is D&I the topic of conversation?
4. What has influenced your thinking around D&I and motivated you to get involved in being an advocate for change?
5. Are there new and/or diverse groups of people in your organization? What new challenges do they bring?
6. How far along the D&I journey do you feel the organization is at?
7. What are the barriers that limit our ability to be D&I?

Benefits/Consequences

8. What success/outcomes has your organization realized from diversity initiatives or best practices?
9. How has D&I impacted your company?
10. On a personal level, what impact does D&I have on you?
11. What are some of the ways you have benefited from or worked with D&I advocates?
12. What are the long-term consequences if we ignore D&I?

Diversity and Inclusion Panel Questions that Beg for Specifics

13. What successful initiatives or best practices has your organization identified concerning diversity and inclusion issues?
14. What would you say is the most difficult part of implementing a D&I program?
15. Where have you experienced the most resistance to D&I? How did you and your team respond?
16. What are the most effective ways to make the case for D&I?
17. Who is involved on your board, management team, and diversity task forces? Do they reflect the organizations you serve? What types of D&I responsibilities do these groups take on?
18. Can you give an example on how to “bake” diversity into a job description?
19. How do you respond to leadership who says “we just hire or promote the best person of the job, regardless of race or gender?”
20. What are some creative ways to proactively source candidates from underrepresented communities?
21. How do we involve our employees from underrepresented populations without making them feel tokenized?
22. What strategies do you use for developing innovative diverse teams?
23. How do you identify and/or work with D&I advocates?
24. How have D&I advocates helped to make the environment a more inclusive place for everyone?
25. What are some specific ways that you have advocated for change and the successes and challenges you’ve faced?

Questions about Application to the Audience

26. What is your biggest piece of advice for getting started with D&I?
27. How do we get the entire company—including our leadership team—on board with D&I initiatives?
28. What advice would you give to those who are trying to identify and work with other D&I advocates?
29. What advice do you have for those who want to be D&I advocates and aren’t sure how to start?
30. How can D&I be a priority for organizations that have other big issues to deal with?

A big thank you to Lever and the British Chamber of Commerce for inspiration in building this list of great questions for any kind of diversity and inclusion panel discussion!

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: TAKE THE STAIRS: 7 STEPS TO ACHIEVING TRUE SUCCESS

Have you ever had a book arrive in your hands at just the right moment in time? Just when you need it? Self-Discipline Strategist Rory Vaden wrote [this terrific book](#) and I thought it was quite appropriate since I just set some new goals for the year!

I believe I am a fairly disciplined person, but know I can do better. So Rory's book was interesting and insightful. The premise of the book revolves around making better decisions in order to improve your self-discipline and your life. In it, he covers seven principles that will help you achieve success. It's really quite an engaging and thought-provoking book.

Want to know how you are doing? Take the Focused Forty questionnaire at his [website](#) to see how disciplined you truly are. My test results were SPOT ON and showed me how much more disciplined I can be.

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