

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Exploration Workshop Design



Exploration Workshops provide valuable input from important stakeholders at the beginning of a transformation process.

They help to gain an initial, broad understanding of an organization; therefore, they serve as starting points for many change processes.

Since a good understanding of an organization is essential to develop the right process, it is important to design the exploration workshops carefully. These allow valuable insights to be gained that can then be used throughout the process.








Additionally, these workshops serve as an opportunity to initially, broadly and directly involve an organization's people in the process; therefore, they have the potential to create momentum for the change, if done correctly. Enabling a good dialogue and giving people enough opportunities to share their input and ideas is crucial.

Most of the time, several workshops are needed to gain a thorough understanding of an organization. The groups formed in the workshop should be created based on the professions or areas in which the people in the organization work, as this allows differentiated views from different angles to be derived. In some cases or in smaller organizations, mixed groups can also be an option.

Participants are normally nominated by leadership. These people should include important opinion leaders in their areas and people that are critical but constructive and have an interest in shaping the organization.

Duration 4–6 h	Participants 10–15 people each	Facilitation flipcharts, pinboards for stations, facilitation material (pens, dots, post-it notes), templates
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Exploration Workshop Design | Process

Framing 	Check-in 	Cultural exploration 	Analysis of status quo 	Identifying hot issues 	Optional: concept work 	Next steps and check-out 
<p>10 min</p> <p>At the beginning of the workshop, clearly outline what the workshop will be about and define the goals. Ideally top management welcomes the participants to set the tone for the workshop and to ensure the participants that their contributions are highly valued.</p>	<p>20 min</p> <p>In order to ensure active participation, it is essential to get people talking already during the check-in period. This could be facilitated by using the Speed Talking tool or through the Your Spot on the Curve exercise (see Tool Descriptions). The questions used should slowly introduce the topic to the participants.</p>	<p>60 min</p> <p>To gain an initial understanding of the organization, explore it with the help of two cultural exploration methods: Our Secret Rules and Drawing Organizational Culture (see Tool Descriptions).</p> <p>If time is limited, focus on the drawing exercise since the questions used in the Secret Rules tool could also be incorporated in the organizational assessment.</p>	<p>40–50 min</p> <p>Homogenous pairs work at 6–8 stations with previously defined fields of observation (e.g., leadership, infrastructure, cooperation). At the stations, the pairs document what they think is currently going well with regard to this aspect and what needs improvement (see Tool “Organizational Assessment”). The facilitator then goes through the results together with the group, adding any additional points that come up.</p>	<p>15-60 min</p> <p>Based on these results, the hot issues are identified. This could be done by using OPERA (see Tool “OPERA”) or by assigning people to groups of 3 and giving them the task to locate 5-6 “Hot Issues” that are then documented on cards and presented.</p> <p>Another option would be to let the pairs assign a specific number of dots (e.g., 5) to the topics on the boards and examine the topics that received the most points.</p>	<p>30–45 min</p> <p>Small groups engage in concept work regarding the ranked topics to develop these in more detail (e.g., by using a provided template outlining the most important factors to consider) before presenting these to the group for feedback (see Tool “Change Initiative Profile”).</p>	<p>15 min</p> <p>The next steps in the process are outlined.</p> <p>If feedback from the workshop will be given to leadership or a project team by using the Exploration Feedback tool (see Tool Description), two delegates are chosen to represent the group further in the process.</p> <p>The workshop ends with a short reflection (e.g., write one sentence about today’s workshop).</p>