

About the Pro Action Café

The Pro Action Café is a methodology for creative and inspirational conversation where participants are invited to share their questions (around projects, seed ideas etc) and get input (deeper questions, knowledge, experience) from others, to help move from questions to actions. The original concept of Pro Action Café is a blend from World Café and Open Space Technology.

What is the Pro Action Café Good For?

As a conversational process, Pro Action Café is an innovative yet simple methodology for hosting conversations about questions and projects that matter to the people that attend. These conversations link and build on each other as people move between groups, cross-pollinate ideas, and discover new insights into the questions or issues that are most important in their life, work or community.

As in Open Space Technology, topics are brought forward by participants themselves. There is no set agenda, only overall guiding questions, with the intention of deepening the learning process of all participants. As in a World Café, it can evoke and make visible the collective intelligence of any group, thus increasing people's capacity for effective action in pursuit of common aims. This means that during this event we participate in different topics of conversation.

Pro Action Café can be used with an open invitation to a broad number of people and/or as a methodology for a specific group, organization, or community to engage in creative and inspirational conversation. In this way it is a good tool for convergence and getting into actions.

Flow of a Pro Action Café

- Welcome and Check-in circle
- Announcing the topics
- Explaining the process
- Three rounds of conversation
- Closing circle

Description of the process

Welcome... Arriving time with open reception, warm-up, getting to know the others informally. Give an introduction to the gathering, that participants have the opportunity to either ask a question and get help from others or to get their own question developed by helping others.

Check-in... Everyone sit in a big circle, a chance to 'land' (enjoy the quietness with each other and think about what your own question would be) and connect with others and the space, people to consider in silence a decision for the evening – share your question and have others work on it or just move around and contribute to others' questions.

Announce questions... After that quiet moment invite people to bring forward their question – with that they are buying/selecting the table (first come first served). The number of tables needed for the evening is one table for every four participants (e.g. if 20 people participate, 5 tables are needed). After all tables have been chosen by someone sharing a question, invite all other participants to think about which table they want to go to first and explain the process.

Conversation rounds... Three rounds of the consulting process moving the problem. Participants are invited to join another table for the 2nd round, hosts remain at their table to host the 2nd and 3rd rounds.

The three conversation rounds help people to shift their question:

- What is the quest behind the question? Every participant is invited to challenge the table host of what is the deeper meaning or of what the more extract/general question is (e.g. what does the question mean to the host).
- What is missing? A discovery question once the quest has been redefined, what makes the picture more complete (e.g. what is a question not asked yet, what are perspectives or options not considered yet).
- Allow for another break (maybe shorter depending on overall timing), hosts to remain at tables to think through what they've learned so far. When new travellers come back to the 3rd round after the break, the host can summarize what was learned in previous rounds and add in own planned actions (share what was learned in the action mode).
- Third round is for the hosts to consolidate their learnings into action – What did I learn? What next steps will I take? Think about actions. The outcome of this round is that the host, but also the participants take an action away from that round for themselves.

Closing... Conclude with feedback in big circle, where the host of each table shares what happened at their table and what they take away from it. If time allows, anyone can share their Café experience.

[A great video on the Pro Action Cafe is available here.](#) Additional resources on hosting a Pro Action Cafe can be found [here](#).

Page contents adapted from resources in the Art of Hosting and Pro Action Cafe communities.

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