



ICANN

Chairing Skills Program

Virtual Collaboration



incitelearning

Agenda



- **Intros**
- **Virtual Collaboration**
- **ICANN Best Practice**
- **Tips and Tricks for Virtual Collaboration**
- **Virtual Meeting Process**
- **Closing this meeting**

Intros



- Name
- What group do you chair?
- Top challenge

ICANN Best Practices

We sought the wisdom of the ages



incite learning

ICANN Virtual Collaboration Best Practices



- Be realistic about the amount of time it takes
- Foster positive productive relationships with support staff
- Be neutral and stay that way
- Lead from behind
- Enjoy learning from the group
- Maintain the WG as open/safe place
- Be curious and creative
- Treat surprises as puzzlers not problems
- Apply knowledge in a creative way

ICANN Virtual Collaboration Best Practices



- Be comfortable in the knowledge that not everything will work
- Know when to ditch an idea that isn't working
- Encourage others to be innovating and sharing their ideas as well
- Function well in diversity - appreciating, leveraging
- Set and manage expectations more proactively
- Know your IT
- Spend more time building and maintaining relationships

Tips and Tricks for Virtual Collaboration



Virtual Collaboration Charter



- **Goals:** desired outcome
- **Scope:** high level deliverables or performance targets
- **Resources:** financial and human
- **Schedule boundaries:** major constraints, time zone issues
- **Milestones:** How will progress be benchmarked?
- **Roles:** Spell out roles in a public space (wiki, Google docs, etc.) to everyone know what everyone does
- **Tasks:** Who owns each task
- **Processes:**
 - Group decisions
 - Tracking progress
 - Sharing updates
 - Technologies to be used
- **Establish group agreements for conduct, i.e. ground rules**

Meet your colleagues



- Where are they based?
- What is their background (bios?)
- What information do they have that you don't?
- What are they worried about?
- What excites them about being in this group?
- What are their expectations for the collaboration?
- What do they want to learn?
- Which tools do they prefer and where are their proficiencies?
- Any constraints or challenges that might impact their work?
- What kind of time do they have to commit?
- Any conflicts of interest serving on this group?

Build trust quickly



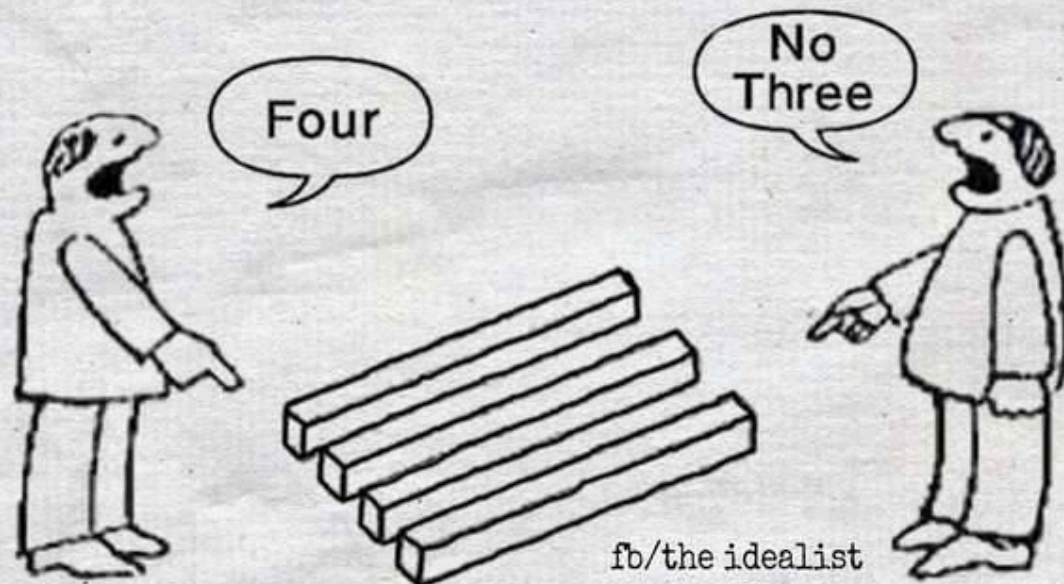
- Initial meetings engender assumed trust. Reinforce this by being gracious, recognizing performance, and build your credibility by beating deadlines and being effective in your facilitation
- Be predictable with times you are available, answering emails efficiently, perhaps setting up a time that you are accessible. Be responsive
- Be persistent and positive, always assuming goodwill.

Collaboration = Win-Win Approach



**"Everything we hear
is an opinion, not a fact.
Everything we see
is a perspective, not the truth."**

- Marcus Aurelius



Collaboration = Win-Win Approach



Listen
actively and
ask



Deflect
aggression &
diffuse
emotion



Surface the
real issues
and reframe
in a mutually
discussable
way



Focus on
resolution /
listen & assert
appropriately.

**Change mode of interaction
from email to phone when
possible or from phone to in
person or at least video
interaction**

Conflict Don'ts



- Don't try to resolve interpersonal conflict via email
- Don't let task related arguments become personal
- Don't publically confront on phone or copy all, no one responds well to being embarrassed
- Don't talk about other team members negatively and steer others away from it as well.
- Don't discuss conflict resolution with other parties than those involved

Pick the right channel of communication



- What do you want the recipient to do? If it's complicated use phone or video
- How might recipients respond? If emotionally charged phone or video. If miscommunication is possible; then phone or video.
- Can information be shared via email prior to interaction?
- What platforms does ICANN support to assist you?
- If you need to talk through information, webinar, go to meeting, etc.
- If you need a short response use email or IM
- Change venue if needed. If it starts on email you can move to phone

Hold people accountable



- **Push them to commit to concrete plans**
- **Make assignments public**
- **Be gracious when tasks are completed and reply all with compliments**
- **Establish a sense of reciprocity. You are willing to work and help too.**
- **Be positive**

Give feedback



- What is your intention?
- What is going on with this person?
- Observation
- Impact
- Suggestion
- Pause and clarify

Receive feedback



- Take a breath
- Pull them into the model if they are not being behaviorally specific
- Paraphrase/summarize to show understanding
- Don't defend or argue
- Be gracious
- Allow yourself time to process if needed

Set Boundaries: This is Big!



- Answer emails at set times, morning and afternoon perhaps. Don't check all the time. If you do and feel a need to respond just say you saw the message and will respond within 24 hours.
- On long IM threads bail when you need to and if you aren't needed just say so and move on
- Chances are this is not your day job so don't let it become one. Parkinson's Law.
- Don't get caught up in politics and gossip it's a time suck
- Stick to your rules so you have a life
- Invite casual contact when you want it. If you are working on stuff not mentally taxing let group members know you are available and what you are working on.
- Set and maintain a schedule that works for all
- Have a set work time for yourself so it doesn't creep into all aspects of life
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish each day

Virtual Meeting Process



Preparation



- **Decide if a meeting is needed.**
 - What do you want to accomplish?
 - Will moving forward require back and forth in real time?
 - Will it help our group dynamic to interact real time?
- **Create an agenda and have others look at it.**
- **Go over the agenda in advance with ICANN staff (agenda, subject matter, expectation of next steps, difficult areas or persons to be aware of)**
- **Doodle for a time**
- **Make sure that materials are distributed in advance of the meeting (while a staff task, the Chair should know what people have in front of them)**
- **Pick a platform and make sure the technology is in working order and have your crisis card handy**
- **Check the tech before the meeting and do a dry run if anything is new with the tools or people running the tools.**
- **Agree on who will handle the queue, having ICANN staff do this is wonderful so you can lead.**

Opening the Meeting



- As chair, stay calm; maintain a neutral position as chair (and clearly state when you are change hats to express a personal or company/group view), remain polite yet firm, and do not let a challenge to the process or subject matter derail the session (good point and we will seek further clarification).
- It is important to set the stage for the meeting/call – and time limits. Welcome participants, acknowledge contributions, note regular and new people on the call, state the purpose clearly; get agreement for the agenda, and move forward.
- Remind the group of any group agreements that might apply on the call such as saying your name before you speak
- Go over roles for group members (see below). This helps break the ice and establishes communication norms before discussing weightier items.

Conducting the Meeting



- 1. Keep the focus of the group on the agenda and the subject matter. Listen carefully (use staff or chat room remarks) to detect the direction/tone of the discussion.**
- 2. Allow debate but do not let it overwhelm the discussion. Draw out the silent members as a balance to the vocal ones. Close off debate politely to reach a conclusion or to say we need more time on this item; and move to the next agenda item.**
- 3. Balance participation between introverts and extroverts. With smaller groups go around to each person for input on an issue or question. Ask them to make a note of their response first then go around so all are prepared to respond. If someone dominates simply defer from them by paraphrasing their view and moving it to someone else.**
- 4. Don't schedule status update show and tell sessions. Everyone gets bored and it is hard to get them back. This can be done as a pre-reading before the meeting.**

Conducting the Meeting (cont'd)



5. Don't get sidetracked and go down the rabbit hole. Again this only engages a few people, most of the time just one. Bring it back to topic when it goes off topic. Learn to be assertive.
6. Address questions quickly and offer to add to the explanation outside of the meeting or offline. Unanswered questions tend to fester and can complicate the group efforts and discussion.
7. Politely call out bad behaviors right way. For example, "Raj, you interrupted Julia. Julia please repeat your last point."
8. Minimize the mute button. Although handy having the mute button on encourages bad behavior like multitasking and walking away from the call. If there is background noise use the mute button, otherwise be ready to talk.

Ending the Meeting



- Summarize the conclusions/action items/next steps
- Articulate the value of what you have discussed and thank them for their time and participation.
- Assure members that note/recordings will be available to future use or for those not attending.

Following up on the Meeting



- **Following up on the Meeting**
- **Reach out to those who were supportive of efforts (thanks for a helpful session) and to those who disagreed (hear your point of view) to let them know that the consensus process is important and we need to move forward.**
- **Send a summary of agreements, accountability and timeframe (Who, What, When)**

Roles for Group Members



- **Tech Czar, Lead Geek:** This person is the go to when there are problems with tech or people cannot access materials. Having one person for this as the go to is great because you don't have multiple solutions to a problem all at the same time. Establish alternative communication channel during the meeting to use with the Tech Czar so the meeting is not disturbed.
- **Queue Manager:** Clarify in advance who will be handling the queue. Don't try to do this yourself.
- **Facilitator:** This is probably you as the Chair. The role is to move the process ahead, balance participation, and cover the agenda. This is also a role that can be assigned if you want to share power.
- **Timekeeper:** This role not only tracks time spent on agenda items they also inject reminders of how much time is left on an item so the agenda is covered and people aren't hung up on one item for too long.
- **Scribe:** Makes sure the meeting is captured in both recorded form and on paper so there is a rapid turn around of information. This is a great way to engage quiet people.

Roles for Group Members



- **Presenter:** Give them a heads up if they are presenting during the call so they can be familiar with the tech and perhaps be part of the dry run. Go over what is expected and coach them on how the group best receives information.
- **SME:** This might be a regular attendee group member or a guest that calls in at a certain time to contribute to the discussion. Coordinate time and tech beforehand as well as expectations and communication tips.
- **Plant:** This is a great role that is so helpful to you. It simply someone in the group that you plant some key questions with to be used during the meeting. If you have a quiet group having a plant to ask a well-positioned question creates interaction and helps you move things along.
- **Truth Teller:** This is a role for a respected colleague that the group trusts. The Truth Teller plays devil's advocate at times challenging possible groupthink. Also, this role might point out elephants in the room like: "So it sounds like many of us didn't read over the materials in advance of the meeting. We need to do better."

Wrap up



- Questions?
- Next steps
- Final words

