

## Heidi Nobantu Saul Facilitating Open Space Technology



### Open Space Technology Is

**A group process** that has actually been around for over 30 years and been used in over 135 countries 1000's of times by 10's of thousands of people.

**A simple, powerful way to catalyze** effective working conversations that support positive transformation, increases productivity, inspires creative solutions, improves communication and enhances collaboration.

**A dialogic method** that enables self-organizing groups of all sizes to deal with hugely complex issues in a very short period of time.

**Open Space Technology (OST)** is an innovative approach that helps all kinds of people in any type of organization to create effective, even inspiring, meetings and events. It is a way to convene a group meeting, conference or retreat that generates communication, collaboration, involving millions of people around the world to help ordinary people and organizations achieve extraordinary results.<sup>1</sup>

Used by corporations, nonprofits and community organizations, and in religious groups and communities with groups from five to a thousand or more the dynamics and results are always the same: input from stakeholders at all levels, new ways of thinking and working, large amounts of work done rapidly, bringing perceived competitors together on issues and projects, organizational flexibility, interdepartmental or intercommunity teamwork, a sense of accomplishment and a feeling of passion and energy for the challenges ahead.

Committees, task forces and design teams can take weeks, months, even years to accomplish their goal – much of this same work can be accomplished by holding an Open Space Event. Everyone benefits from and enjoys this high input and high output approach.

### Conditions for a Successful Open Space

There is **a real business issue** or opportunity that no one person, assigned committee or expert knows the answer.

A considerable amount of **complexity**.

Lots of **diversity** in terms of people and points of view.

Real **passion!** (people care) A likely **difference of opinion/conflict**.

A decision time of yesterday. **Genuine need or urgency!**

Next we create the container and provide parameters for the power of self-organizing to do its magic. In an Open Space environment, people tend to be creative, synergistic, they work together and are self-motivated. And.... extraordinary work gets done!

### The 4 Principles & 1 Law of Open Space

#### Whoever Comes Are The Right People

*A reminder that it is not how many people come, or even who comes (in terms of status or position) it is the quality of the interaction and conversation that make the difference.*

#### Whatever Happens Is The Only Thing That Could Have

*A reminder that real learning and real progress will only take place when we all move beyond our original agenda and convention-bound expectations.*

#### Whenever It Starts Is The Right Time

*An important notice about the nature of creativity and spirit!*

#### When It's Over It's Over

*Pay attention to the energetic conclusion of the session –*

#### The Law of Two Feet / Motion and Responsibility

*If you find yourself in any situation where you are neither learning nor contributing, respectfully get up and go somewhere that you will be ~*

### Be Prepared to Be Surprised!

<sup>1</sup> Organizations using Open Space includes Boeing, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Transportation, Owens/Corning Fiberglass, Proctor and Gamble, DuPont, French Ministry of Telecommunications (PTT), U.S. Forrest Service, SAS Airlines, Toronto-Dominion Bank, Rockport Shoes, World Bank, Amnesty International, AT&T, IBM, US WEST, Lucent Technologies, Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, Scottish Parliament, and many schools, hospitals, churches, small towns and villages.

# Open Space Has Been Used for All of the Following Purposes



Develop an organization's **Vision**

To identify, implement, or evaluate **projects**

Development of authentic **brand identity design**

**Facilitate change** in organizations and communities

**Engage communities** and other stakeholders in planning

Generate data for more informed **decision making** in teams

**Manage cultural transition** in organizations (like mergers/acquisitions)

**Generate creative ideas** on issues and opportunities for **strategic planning**

Oversee urban, rural, regional development **multi-stakeholder processes**

Bring together **diverse individuals/shared interest** at an **Un-Conference**

Innovative format for interactive **Annual Retreats and Conferences**

Provide opportunities for **networking** and **collaborative learning**

**Develop** and **improve schools** and educational systems

**Sharing** best practices, **resources, ideas and solutions**

Creative **problem solving** and **solution generation**

**Design innovative products** or product features

Initiate and consolidate **peace processes**

Help people **listen across differences**



*Opening space, inviting diversity and all view points for collective discovery and emergence is a commitment to movement and the opportunity to thrive while riding the currents of uncertainty and change.*



## As Your Facilitator

- I work with you to develop your theme, design an inclusive invitation, and consider everyone who needs to be invited so the whole system is represented.
- Will help you determine where and when to host the event, arrange logistical details and work with venue on the set-up.
- I help you think strategically about how the Open Space is related to and can support other concurrent development or change efforts /Coach you on your role during the event.
- I set-up for and Facilitate the event, notes collection and compile the data generated into the Book of Proceedings.
- I am available to consult and work with you post event to 'make the most of your OST, coaching around next steps and implantation to keep the momentum going.

If this sounds interesting to you and you'd like to have a conversation, get more information and determine if Open Space is a good approach for your upcoming meeting/event or to address a current organizational challenge or opportunity please contact me!

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