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Overview of Open Space Technology

What is Open Space Technology (OST) methodology?

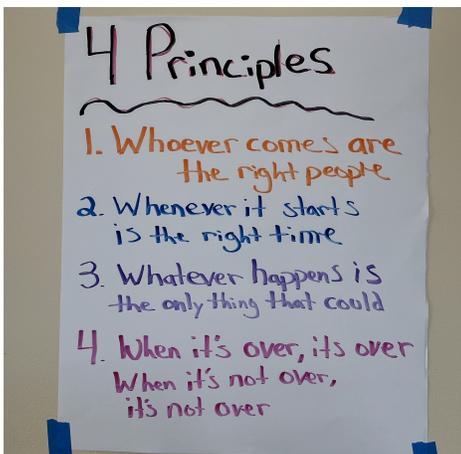
Open Space Technology (OST) is a workshop facilitation method. It is a highly participatory facilitation methodology, developed in the late 1980s by Harrison Owen of Maryland, USA. It is a simple, powerful way of holding highly productive and inspiring workshops, conference, consultation, for small and large groups, from ten up to several hundred people. It relies on leadership and self-management from the participants. This methodology is now used around the world as an effective process for generating ideas and facilitating change in both organizational and community settings. OST workshops are simple to organize and require little lead time. Although it appears deceptively simple, the Facilitator should be trained in using this methodology.

When to use OST for workshop facilitation?

OST is best used when there is an important issue to be addressed or a compelling theme to be discussed; there is a diverse group of people involved; there is complexity regarding the issue; the sponsors/organizers truly want inputs from participants, they want to provoke thoughts, creativity; and when decisions need to be made quickly.

How OST workshop space looks like?

- A compelling theme displayed.
- Participants seated in one big circle or a few concentric circles.
- Break-out spaces with tables, and report template on it.
- A Facilitator who is non-interventionist and does not try to control or regulate the way people should behave.
- An empty agenda' wall.
- OST Posters - Four principles, one law, Butterfly and Bumblebee displayed.



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What OST method does?

OST builds on group participation and energy in ways that few other processes do. It taps into the spirit of an organization/group like no other large or small group intervention can. OST is a facilitation method that attends to both passion and responsibility.

What are benefits of using OST method?

OST meetings help individuals, teams and organizations:

- Scope for every voice, idea, opinion to be expressed.
- Develop greater understanding and awareness of oneself, others, and the topic.
- Rekindle passion for the work/chosen theme.
- Creates conditions that allow creativity and leadership to surface naturally.
- Creates environment for innovation, problem solving, teamwork and ownership.
- Re-energize organization or community.
- Improves communications and teamwork.
- Generate inputs and ideas efficiently even with a large and diverse group.
- Foster respect for all voices, minimize hierarchical work and meeting patterns
- Scope to develop practical visions, action plan with clear responsibilities & commitment from individuals & groups (If OST workshop is for two days at least).
- Provides a 'Book of Proceedings', comprising all break-out group discussion reports. An efficient of producing workshop report, quickly.