

# From here, you'll harness The Power of all Voices in meetings.

## Why do inclusive meetings matter?

Inclusive meetings aren't just a "nice to have", they are essential to achieving **better business outcomes**. Research consistently shows that when people feel **safe and able to contribute**, teams share more ideas, challenge assumptions, identify risks earlier and make **stronger more informed decisions** overall.

This one-page guide outlines simple, practical ways to make your meetings more inclusive, ensuring **every voice is heard** and all employees are **empowered to contribute at their best**.

## How to make your meetings inclusive

### Brief people in advance

Give reflective thinkers, quieter voices and non-native speakers **time to process** content and a clear idea of what will be expected of them, before the meeting.

### Structure for contribution

Use simple structures to make it **easier for anyone to speak up** or share a different point of view, for example by offering different ways to contribute.

### Make it safe to speak up or disagree

**Set the tone** and **model the behaviour** by inviting and valuing challenge and by focusing disagreement on ideas, not people.

## BEFORE THE MEETING



### SMART5

Share the Smart5 in the **meeting invite** as early as possible.

1. **Goal:** The specific outcome the meeting is trying to achieve.
2. **Role:** What is expected from each participant (e.g. ideas, input, decision-making, update-sharing).
3. **Format:** The agenda, structure, and inclusive tools or techniques to be used.
4. **Dos & Don'ts:** Clear behavioural norms to encourage inclusion and respect.
5. **Preparation:** What participants need to do in advance to make the most of the session (e.g. read documents, give feedback, etc.).

### Why is the Smart5 important?

The **Smart5** gives participants clarity before the meeting, ensuring they come prepared and able to contribute **effectively**. This maximises the meeting's **inclusivity** and **productivity**.

The **Smart5** benefits everyone, but is especially helpful for those who appreciate the time to process information before openly sharing their thoughts.

## DURING THE MEETING



### SET THE TONE AT THE START

- ❑ Open the meeting by explaining the purpose of the meeting and what you need participants to do.
- ❑ Give guidance on helpful contributions and behaviour



### MODEL THE BEHAVIOUR

- ❑ Use your **authority as the meeting leader** to guide the conversation in a way that is fair and serves the goal.
- ❑ If the group is quiet, **ask basic, conversation-starting questions** to encourage participation.
- ❑ **Appreciate all contributions out loud.**



### ACTIVELY BALANCE VOICES

- ❑ Use **participation techniques** (i.e. Rounds, Brainwriting, Pair & Share) to help quieter contributors and manage dominant ones.
- ❑ Manage dominant voices or frequent interrupters by
  - ❑ Addressing interruptions **immediately**.
  - ❑ **Pause and redirect** by politely but firmly saying 'Let's allow [speaker] to finish their point first'.
  - ❑ If interruptions persist, remind the group of the **behavioural norms**, for example, 'Remember we are giving everyone space to share their ideas fully'.

### Technique Instructions

- ✓ **Rounds:** Each participant takes turns speaking in a pre-determined order, to ensure equal contribution.
- ✓ **Brainwriting:** Invite people to think and make notes silently before sharing them as a group.
- ✓ **Pair & Share:** Break the group into pairs to discuss their thoughts before sharing them with the whole meeting.

### Why is it important to address interruptions immediately?

Interruptions can discourage quieter contributors from participating, leading to feeling disengaged or sidelined.

## AFTER THE MEETING



### CAPTURE AND REFLECT

- ❑ **Ask 'clean-up' questions:** Turn discussion into outcomes by capturing **decisions**, agreed follow-up **actions** and ownership, **parking lot** topics to come back to and **heads-up** topics to be aware of.
- ❑ **SmartCapture:** Summarise the outcomes in a shared document, (i.e. Teams channel/ meeting chat, Whiteboard) (use **SmartCapture Canvas** template → ).
- ❑ **Reflect and improve:** Think about whether this was an inclusive meeting and gather feedback on what could be improved next time.

Decisions	Actions
Parking lot	Heads up