



As some of the pandemic fog begins to clear, and your team is hopefully turning from crisis management to recovery efforts, are they still stuck managing the day-to-day tasks? Even if we are still cleaning up some messes or adapting to new roles, is your team pausing to have conversations about the long-term success of the organization? It's the perfect time to spring into action this month and get talking.

Kristin

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STRATEGIC THINKING TIP: ENSURE STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM DISCUSSION

A frequent complaint I hear from CEOs about their leadership team is their lack of ability to think strategically – to look up beyond the day-to-day activities and consider the critical factors and variables that will affect the long-term future of the organization.

I suggest this simple process to ensure a strategic leadership team discussion:

1. Anytime a team member runs into something “strategic,” they post it on a shared website. What’s strategic? Anything that may (or may not) apply to the business, the industry, the clients, etc. It could be an article, a podcast, a book..... whatever strikes your team as “interesting.”
2. In preparation for the leadership team meeting, each team member is required to look over the posts – and to select one to share the highlights with the team and why they thought it was interesting.
3. During the meeting, the team dedicates time to go around the room and have each team member share and to discuss.
4. Finalize the conversation with key themes for consideration. Capture the key themes in the shared website.

Over time, the team will notice a few overarching themes that could trigger new strategic initiatives. As a result, the team will start being more strategic in their thinking!

HOW TO SELECT DIVERSE PEOPLE TO ANSWER A QUESTION DURING A PANEL DISCUSSION

As a leading expert on moderating panels, I am often asked to watch a panel discussion and provide the organization and/or moderator feedback – what went well and what they could upgrade for the next time.

Recently, I watched a panel discussion that had a robust Q&A session. After a few questions, it became obvious that the moderator was selecting men – and caucasian men only – even though others were raising their hands to ask a question.

Which got me thinking about the subconscious biases we have – and how they creep into something as simple as selecting a person to ask a question during Q&A!

How to Select Diverse People to Ask a Question During Q&A

First, be aware of your own tendency to pick men, women, certain ethnicities, races, or even sides of the room. For the most part, we tend to pick people similar to us, so just be aware of this simple subconscious bias.

Most people just call on the first hand that goes up, or the closest person to them. And while that might be easy, it certainly isn't deliberate nor intentional. I suggest you develop a "system" to select a wide range of people within the audience. I find it helpful to note the visible demographics in the audience and try to replicate *at least* the same ratios:

- **Gender.** Yes, the visible gender lines are blurring, but I think you get the point that you don't want to keep calling on the same gender. I try to start with one gender (preferably a woman) and go back and forth (man, woman, man, woman etc.)
- **Age.** At this point in my life, I am a lousy age estimator, but the idea is that you get a good cross-section of Boomers, Gen X/Y, and Millennials.
- **Ethnicity/race.** Your audience may be full of one race or a melting pot of diverse people. Make sure you call on those who come from an underrepresented population!
- **Population in the room.** For in-person panels, I divide the room into quadrants and make my way clockwise from one quadrant to another (or use Catchbox to throw the microphone to the questioner). In the virtual world, you may or may not be able to see the participants, depending on the settings. If you are able to see the participants, you may have several screens, so scroll through the screens.
- **Socio-economic levels.** This one is a bit trickier to discern visually – but sometimes it is obvious. For example, the "leadership" is in suits and the employees are in polos/working clothes.

Obviously, you want to balance all these variables. Be thinking about whom you have heard from and whom you need to hear from. Pay particular attention to those demographics that have not contributed a question – and do what you can to inspire a lively, informative, and diverse Q&A session during a panel discussion.

FROM THE BOOKSHELF: EVERYDAY LEGACY: LESSONS FOR LIVING WITH PURPOSE RIGHT NOW

I was approaching one of those birthdays that end in a "zero" when a colleague recommended Codi Shewan's book, [*Everyday Legacy: Lessons for Living with Purpose, Right Now*](#). Perfect timing as I am past the halfway marker on the road in life, and there is something about those mile-marker birthdays that make you more reflective.

Shewan spent 20 years as a funeral director, so you would think he would know a lot about dying, yet his message is about living each day with intentionality. Frankly, it is not a novel idea. I first remember hearing about writing your obituary in Stephen Covey's book [*The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*](#). However, it is the stories from within this book

that made me think deeper about my relationships and how we can influence and impact those around us.

I was thinking this would be a quick read (160 pages), but I kept putting the book down, pondering the possibilities, and then talking about it with my husband. It's inspirational and has influenced my thinking about my personal everyday legacy.

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