Using asynchronous meetings
to boost performance, accelerate results

Benefits

- Boost participation rate by making it easier to gather opinions and ideas from people any time, anywhere
- Sharpen the focus of real-time meetings
- Shorten time needed for synchronous meetings
- Enable members to learn about each other in advance
- Allow for anonymous contributions
- Summarize team responses so all can review quickly and move on to conversation

Success guidelines

- Use a tool that’s widely accessible and easy to use. Avoid software that must be downloaded, especially if you’re including people from outside of your own organization
- Send your invitation to participate at least four business days in advance. Make sure to include url, username, password and other important information
  - Offer an email address and phone number in your email invitation in case people have difficulty accessing or navigating
- Consider what kind of responses you need as you set up your asynch meeting
  - For example, if you’re looking for a ranking or another type of quantifiable response, consider making a survey at least part of the asynch meeting. If you want to probe about certain issues, asking open-ended questions is more appropriate
- Ask questions clearly. In most cases, open-ended questions will yield richer results. Avoid compound questions. Test the wording in advance, especially if you’re including non-native English speakers in your conference
- Determine which questions/segments will be anonymous, if any. A general rule of thumb: If a question or issue is likely to be contentious or sensitive, err on the side of anonymity. Some tools allow only the facilitator to see who says what
  - Be sure to let participants know which responses will be attributed and which will not
- Limit the time needed to respond to no more than five questions and a total of 15 minutes to encourage participation. Though it may be tempting to solicit input on a whole host of topics, too many questions may scare people away.

- Invite people to make introductions as part of the first question, and encourage them to attach photos of themselves in non-work situations. This will help create social capital, build relationships, and develop trust more quickly. Even when most people know each other, asking a question that will reveal something about themselves will help members to connect in new ways.
  - Ask a different question as part of the intro section each time the group meets asynchronously, even when most or all already know each other.
  - Examples: Ask participants to describe a favorite vacation spot, pastime, sport or a particularly memorable meal.

- If you are using an asynchronous meeting prior to a face-to-face or same-time audio- or videoconference, include the relevant logistics in your virtual asynchronous meeting room.

- Consider whether how you want to make the summary of responses available after the asynch meeting. For example, you may want to send the summary via email or post in a shared team site, or you may want to review a subset of the responses during a face-to-face meeting or a team phone conference.