



Mastermind Sessions

What Are They and How Pop-Up Learning Experiences
Drive Attendee Engagement



Essentially a mastermind session is a pop-up learning experience powered by crowdsourced information and spontaneous participant interaction. “Great,” you may be thinking, “What does that mean?” We like to think of Masterminds as a “disruptor” to traditional conference education and networking, breaking through the monotony of a typical PowerPoint presentation format. Here’s a look at the process of creating a successful mastermind at your next conference.

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Mastermind Sessions 101

Mastermind sessions use a bottom-up learning style – topics are selected by the attendees and content is created by them on the spot. The session lacks a strict structure and can inspire an environment of change and collaboration. The session, consisting of 5 to 15 individuals, includes a facilitator or “mastermind” with extensive knowledge in the overall subject area. The facilitator is present to guide the conversation by encouraging everyone to participate and can also note any takeaways for the participants.



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Selecting the Topics

Prior to the conference or during the conference, participants can be polled on mastermind topics. These topics represent their viewpoint and unique perspectives, giving the attendee an active say in the content. And often, the topics may include subjects an event committee would not have thought about.

Selecting a Facilitator (the Mastermind)

An essential element to this format is having a strong knowledgeable facilitator and overall subject matter expert. The facilitator can be selected from conference speakers, conference registrants or be invited to the conference as an industry leader. Being a facilitator means understanding the balance of influencing the discussion while not taking it over. They are meant to steer the group through a positive peer interaction flow. Because the focus is on active and collaborative learning, the facilitator can let the attendees select the topic and encourage an expert attendee to lead the discussion.

Structure – or Lack Thereof

The sessions are informal – usually chairs are set up in a circle and placed in several spots in the venue. Why? It lends itself to the nature of the event. Participants can come and go as the 45-minute mastermind session takes place in the lobby or exhibit hall. As we've mentioned, mastermind sessions can be planned out with participants knowing the topic before they take a seat or completely spontaneous with the topic being selected by an attendee at the start of the event. A mastermind session does not have to take place in one physical spot, it can take place through any number of online meeting platforms, increasing the variety of participants and the chances of having a skilled mastermind subject expert present.

Is it for everyone?

Someone who is new to the concept might be skeptical of an open process that appears to have little structure and relies heavily on attendee participation; but today, there is a constant struggle for mindshare and attendees expect an experience of full immersion – not one that is static and one dimensional. Mastermind sessions appeal to individuals that are seeking out solutions and best practices for innovative topics including policy change, technology challenges and creating unique opportunities. The discussion is sparked by the group dynamics and can lead to insightful debates, new perspectives and event strong partnerships.



And Finally...

The format puts power back in the hand of your conference attendee and serves as a reminder to why they are attending the event in the first place: for growth, education and connection with individuals facing similar challenges. The unique interactions they share with each other are what make events memorable and meaningful.

There is much more to discover about launching Mastermind sessions. If you'd like to learn more and talk to us about creating pop-up learning sessions, please contact us at info@meetingexpectations.com. We can't wait to get to started on "disrupting" the format at your next event.



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