

5 Buzzing bees

What?

This tool aims to engage everyone and bring new energy into the group discussion. It can also help participants involved in a discussion, workshop or maybe a lecture to get to know each other. You have surely heard about “buzz groups” or “bee hives”.

Time?

2-5 minutes, depending on the aim.

Why?

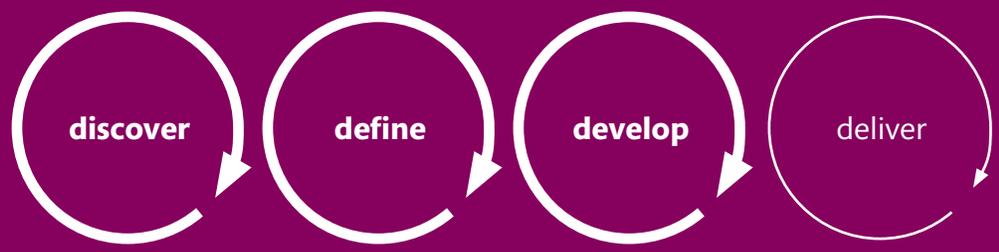
Buzz groups work as a warm-up in a bigger group, for example at the start of a group discussion or a case seminar. It is an effective way to get everyone to actively participate in a bigger discussion. Even if not everyone is getting a chance to speak in the bigger group, the buzz group tool makes sure that all participants have a chance to speak with someone. It is a way to get less active participants engaged and, at the same time, those that take a lot of place to listen to others. Through buzz groups the participants will get the possibility to mirror their ideas in a small group before these ideas are raised in a bigger context.

What is needed?

Nothing special is needed—only participants. If you want to include a summary of the discussion in the buzz groups you can use paper, post-its and/or a whiteboard.

How?

1. Ask the participants to make groups of two or three people. Give them a specific question that they will discuss, and inform them that they will do this for a couple of minutes (or the time that you think is needed).
2. Ask them to turn to each other and start the discussion.
3. When time is up, ask them to come back to the big group discussion.
4. Ask them what they talked about in their buzz groups. If you intend to summarize the discussion, you may want to gather material or information and summarize now, or leave it to a later moment in the discussion.



Hints!

Buzz groups can be used several times during a single discussion, especially if you feel that it's going a little bit slow and the participants aren't willing to discuss. In this case break the discussion and let them go back to their buzz groups for a while—this can accelerate the discussion. You can also allow participants to make new buzz groups, in this way they get to speak with other participants.



Image: Jordan Lane

Read more

It's difficult to find the original source of buzz groups. We suggest that you search independently online.