

# How to run great team meetings

# Roadmap for “focusing” a virtual project team

What comes first in an effective virtual team?  
What comes first in under-performing teams?

Creativity?

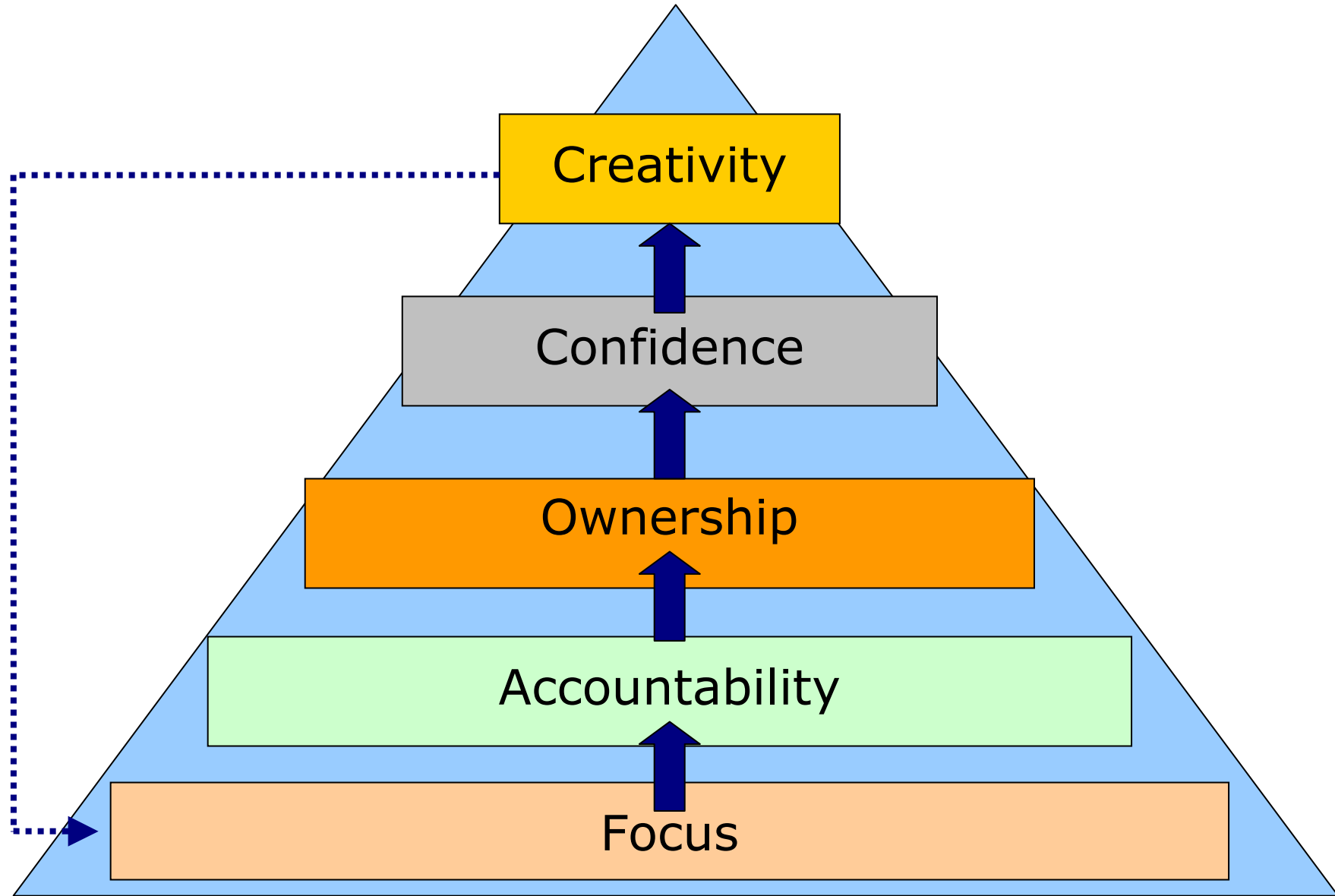
Ownership?

Confidence?

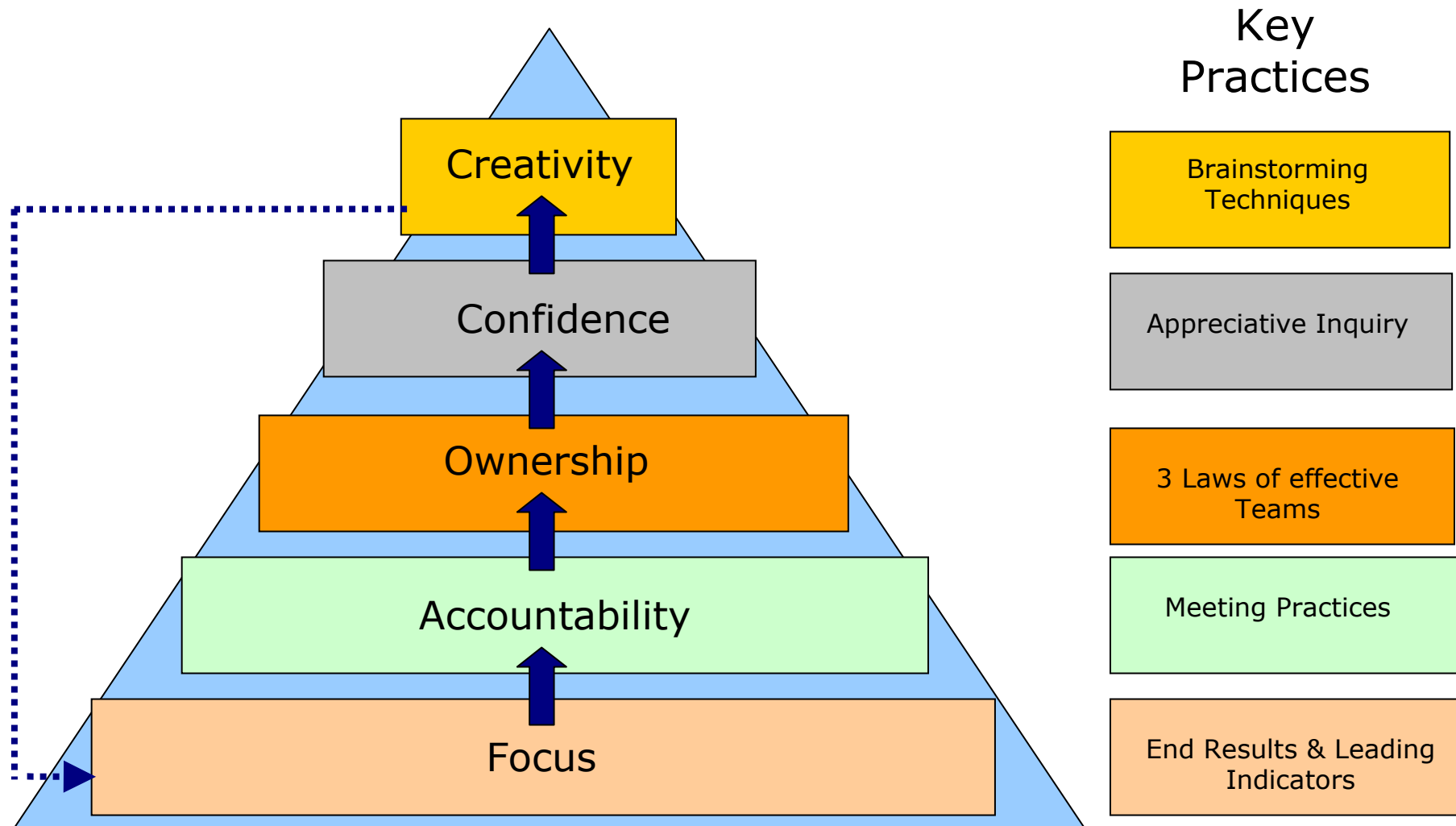
Focus?

Accountability?

# Roadmap for "focusing" a virtual project team



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# Collaborative Operational Meeting

## 7 Key Principles

1. *"Sterile Cockpit"* (Maintain Focus!)
2. *Jackanory* (No Story-telling i.e. reasons, explanations, justifications, causes....)
3. *Sherlock Holmes* (Reveal rather than conceal!)
4. 4 States (done, "on plan", "at risk", missed)
5. Done and "On Plan" - well done! but no discussion necessary at this mtg. Team can challenge!
6. If "At Risk" - new commitment + help required + team questions/comments/offers + customer agreement
7. 5 Roles - Customer, Facilitator, Timekeeper, Scribe, Mood

## Effective Senior Team Meetings

**Companies routinely squander their most precious resource--the time of their top executives. In the typical company, senior executives meet to discuss strategy for only three hours a month (less than 15% of the time they meet). And that time is poorly spent in diffuse discussions never even meant to result in any decision. The price of misused executive time is high. Delayed strategic decisions lead to overlooked waste and high costs, harmful cost reductions, missed new product and business development opportunities, and poor long-term investments. But a few deceptively simple changes in the way top management teams set agendas and structure team meetings can make an enormous difference in their effectiveness. Efficient companies use seven techniques to make the most of the time their top executives spend together:**

1. They keep strategy meetings separate from meetings focused on operations.
2. They explore issues through written communications before they meet, so that meeting time is used solely for reaching decisions.
3. In setting agendas, they rank the importance of each item according to its potential to create value for the company.
4. They seek to get issues not only on, but also off, the agenda quickly, keeping to a clear implementation timetable.
5. They make sure they have considered all viable alternatives before deciding a course of action.
6. They use a common language and methodology for reaching decisions.
7. And they insist that once a decision is made, they stick to it.



# Effective Senior Team Meetings

## The Idea in Brief

Most leadership teams spend just three hours per month making strategic decisions. That translates into less than a week per year. Worse, many teams fritter away those precious hours on unfocused, inconclusive discussion rather than rapid, well-informed decision making.

The consequences? Delayed decisions that lead to wasted resources, missed opportunities, and poor long-term investments. One global firm spent more time each year selecting its holiday card than it did debating a vital Africa strategy.

How can your leadership team avoid such pitfalls? Spend your limited time on issues exerting the greatest impact on your company's long-term value. Deal with operations separately from strategy. Put real choices on the table, evaluating at least three viable options for every strategy. Use meeting time for decision making—not just discussion—and agree on what was decided. And move issues off your agenda as quickly as possible.

Your reward? Strategic decisions—made better and faster.

## The Idea in Practice

Apply these practices to make the best use of your leadership team's time:

### Deal with strategy and operations separately.

Holding separate meetings for each prevents day-to-day operations from dominating your team's agenda and liberates time for substantive strategy debates.

#### ► Example:

Dutch banking giant ABN AMRO's board used to spend only about an hour per month on strategy, with most of its meeting time devoted to day-to-day operational details. But market changes required a more strategic focus. The board now spends slightly less time together—but devotes much more of that time to strategy, typically about 10 hours per month.

### Focus on decisions, not discussions.

Enhance the quality and pace of your team's decision making, for example by distributing reading materials in advance of meetings. Specify why participants must read them (e.g., for information only? discussion and debate? decision making?) This readies participants to devote precious meeting time to deciding crucial issues.

### Measure the real value of every agenda item.

Prioritize meeting agenda items according to each issue's impact on your company's long-term value. Address high-value issues only,

their meeting time on those ten items. This process has transformed the quality and pace of Roche's strategic decision making.

### Get issues off the agenda quickly.

Develop clear timetables detailing when and how participants will decide each issue and who will approve final strategy.

#### ► Example:

At Cardinal Health, a pharmaceutical and medical supply distributor, senior managers continually ask themselves, "When must this decision be made?" and ensure that they reach decisions within a predetermined time. Results? Less overanalysis and more rapid decision making.

### Put real choices on the table.

Evaluate at least three viable alternatives (not just minor variations on one theme) before approving any strategy. This encourages teams to choose the best course of action, not just the most obvious. By debating alternative strategies, British retail bank Lloyds TSB decided to exit international markets, helping to expand its market value 40-fold between 1983 and 2001.

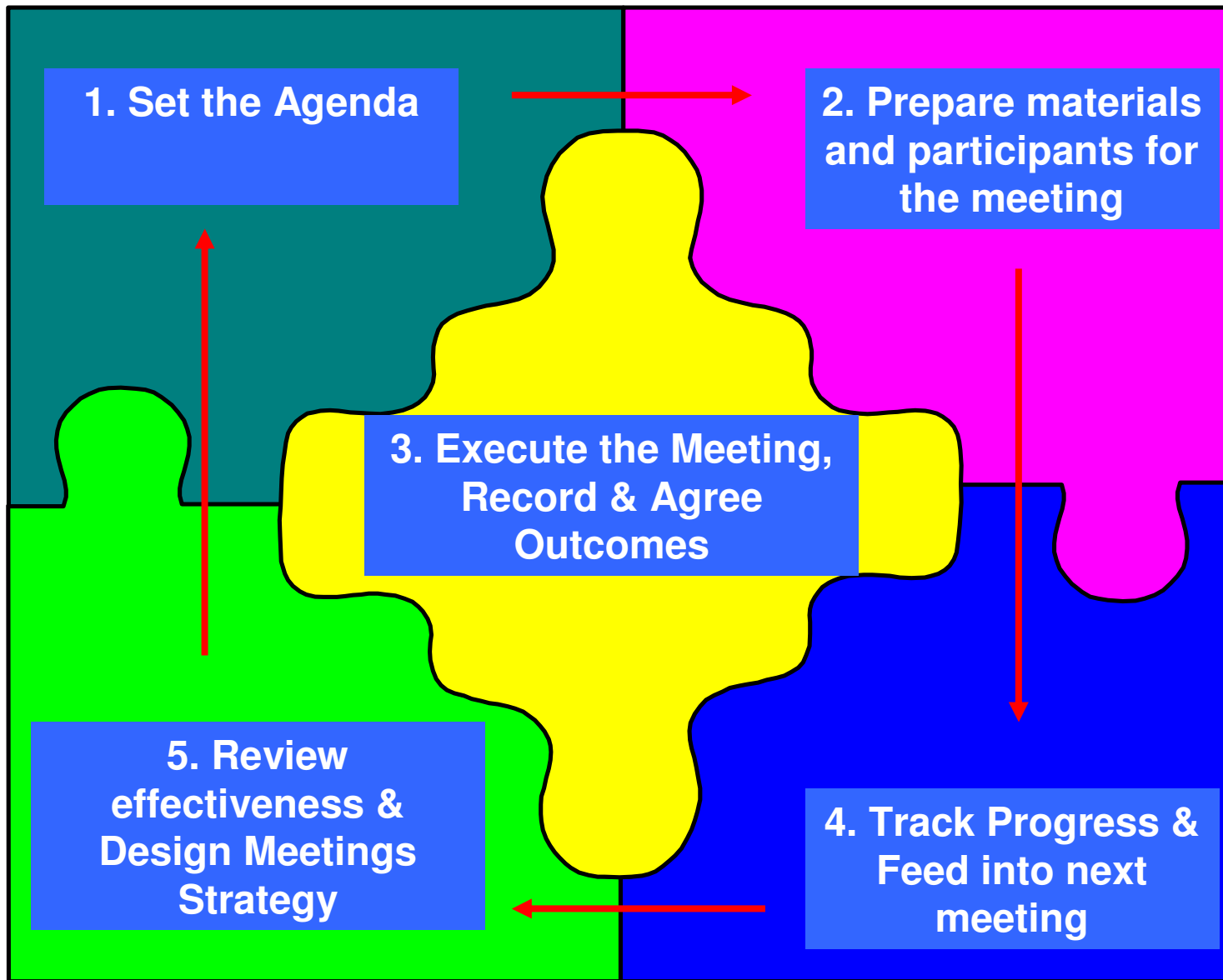
### Make decisions stick.

Explicitly agree on what was decided in the meeting. Then specify the resources (time, talent, and money) required to execute the strategy, as well as the financial results you've committed to deliver.





# Effective Senior Team Meetings



## The Perfect Brainstorm (from IDEO - Americas Leading Design Firm)

### *7 Secrets of Better Brainstorming*

#### 1. SHARPEN THE FOCUS

Start with a well-honed statement of the problem

#### 2. PLAYFUL RULES

Don't start to critique or debate & encourage wild ideas

#### 3. NUMBER YOUR IDEAS

Go for quantity - 100 ideas per hour is good!

#### 4. BUILD AND JUMP

When the energy starts to fade facilitator should *build* on an idea or take a *jump*

#### 5. THE SPACE REMEMBERS

Capture the ideas in a medium visible to the whole group

#### 6. STRETCH YOUR MENTAL MUSCLES

Warm up if the group are new to each other or don't regularly brainstorm or likely to be distracted by other pressing matters

#### 7. GET PHYSICAL

Encourage diagrams, stick figures (2-D), mock-ups and models (3-D)

### *6 Ways to Kill a Brainstorm*

#### 1. THE BOSS GETS TO SPEAK FIRST

The boss will either kill or help idea flow!

#### 2. EVERYBODY GOES IN TURN

Creeping Death kills brainstorming

#### 3. EXPERTS ONLY PLEASE

Diversity is key!

#### 4. DO IT OFF-SITE

Needs to be a regular office thing - not just once a year

#### 5. NO SILLY STUFF

Anything goes and it needs to be fun

#### 6. WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING

Taking notes shifts focus to the wrong side of the brain