



# Pro Action Café



Offers a moderated space to discuss self-initiated topics and actions in smaller groups and in several rounds, combining the World Café and Open Space approach.



Information  
**Ideation  
Consultation**  
Co-Decision



**<15 people**  
**15-30 people**  
**30-100 people**  
100-250 people  
> 250 people



**Preparation:**  
1-3 months for invitation of the participants etc.  
**Implementation:**  
1-6 hours  
**Follow-up:**  
½ -2 days for analysis and documentation



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Resources for a short workshop



**At least one person** for preparation, moderation and documentation

## The Method: What is it, when to use it and what outcome to expect

A Pro Action Café is an action-oriented conversation leveraging collective intelligence and peer-coaching. Topics, or 'Call for Help', are suggested by volunteering participants and discussed in café style in three rounds, each with specified guiding questions. Each new round, participants choose between multiple 'Cafés', tables or virtual rooms with different topics, and contribute actively in the discussion and help the host on his/her topic with their input.

This process can be used to discuss topics and problems, co-develop a project, collect opinions, network and when stuck on an issue. Pro Action Cafés provide new perspectives, an in-depth, multi-angle and reflective processing of questions and issues and empowered, connected participants.

## The Process: How to conduct it in an in-person setting or online using a PC/laptop with video option

The method follows four steps:

- 1. Preparation:** The location is set so that all participants have a place to sit in a circle. Tables are equipped with chairs, colored markers and plain paper to write on.
- 2. Welcome:** Theme and process are introduced, all participants shortly check-in. Participants suggest topics/questions/projects to work on. Each host takes a table.
- 3. Café discussion:** Three rounds of conversations with participants changing topics (=tables/virtual rooms) each round. The topic host stays all rounds and wraps up previous conversation(s) for new participants. In a virtual setting, use a conferencing tool with break-out rooms, one topic and virtual whiteboard for each room.
  - **Round 1 – Understanding & reframing:** What is the quest behind? Why this topic?
  - **Round 2 – What is missing:** Which question, perspective or option isn't considered yet?
  - **Round 3 – Next:** What is learned? How to grow it further? Next steps? Who can help?
- 4. Harvesting:** All participants go into in a plenum circle and topic hosts reflect.

### Blended participation

It is recommended to keep the virtual and in person discussions separate. Both require real time moderation or guidance to ensure that the three rounds take place accordingly and the steps are followed. The "harvesting" can be done virtually and in person combined if the facilities allow for hybrid events.

### Digital communication

Digital invites can be sent to the participants, be it a smaller or larger group. The results should be documented and can also be shared via e-mail and other means (such as whatsapp). The topics should be introduced prior to the event via digital communication (e.g. e-mail).

### Good to know

- Pro Action Cafés borrow the free choice of topics from Open Space and the setting with small conversation tables from the World Café method
- Per topic, count the host plus 3-4 participants
- All attendees divided by how many people sit per one topic in one round, is the amount of topics possible to cover (= amount of tables/rooms)
- First come, first serve principle to choose a topic
- Participants remain in their role throughout the event: Either topic host or consulting participant
- One round may run 20-30min or longer with optional breaks in between, esp. helpful after round 2 so that topic hosts can reflect their learnings
- Read further:
  - <https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/pro-action-cafe>