



# 25 Ingredients For a Successful QI Huddle

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# QI Huddles?

This is a quick guide for teams seeking to test a huddle model for their QI meetings. You do not need to have all the ingredients listed below to have a successful QI huddle; but we predict that, as your team reaches maturity, your meetings will gain enhanced momentum, adopting a more creative stance: icebreakers, creativity activities, using Kanban boards, utilising huddling concepts, “Flash Meetings” within other meetings – and many other ingredients discussed here. Check it out – and let us know via twitter.

Without further ado:

## 25 Ingredients for a successful QI Huddle

**Do your homework (1): preparation sets the stage for creativity.** Rather than improvising your way along, prepare in advance... and then improvise. You will notice the difference. By preparing in advance, you will be able to channel your energy to foster creativity and support.

**Do your homework (2): visit some successful QI team meetings -** In addition to being absolute fun, by visiting successful QI meetings you will:

- (i) Connect with new ideas,
- (ii) Learn from those who have been down the path,
- (iii) Allow yourself to share your unique perspective about their meeting.

This will help you avoid many mistakes – and enhance further your experience.

**Do not reinvent the wheel: Adapt others’ experiences to meet your own needs –** We are great advocates of the CSP (Copying Shamelessly Principle). Have you heard about a meeting format that ties in well with your concept? How about adapt it and make it your own? Copy shamelessly – and give credit, as a means to foster connectivity and network. Do not be shy of adding your own tweaks: your tweaks are what make your project unique. CSP is not about self-imposing the system from other teams, but about adopting whatever works for you.

**Bring the meeting to occur within another meeting –** Rather than creating another meeting time, consider joining with another already occurring meeting. In terms of efficiency, this can be a triple-win situation, since you will 1) inherit the attendees from the other meeting

and benefit from their perspective, 2) add further value and flavour to the original meeting by bringing fresher and unique inputs, 3) avoid creating another meeting to add to everyone's already packed schedule.

This idea is also about rolling out with the *"I-have-no-time paralysis"*.

We will soon write about the concept of "Flash Meetings", which is ideal to work with teams who have no time at all for another additional meeting.

**Interweave several meetings** – Another idea is interweaving several meetings, by giving "flash summaries" (20 seconds or so) about your meeting, in meetings that are already established. This may get you further buy-in, and sharing concepts, ideas and innovation with further audiences.

**Escape from the "business meeting" format** – Be participatory and interactive, rather than replicating the traditional top-down model of meetings: Multiple drivers, rather than just one driver with many passengers. It is common for teams to start up their QI meetings as an emulation of their business meetings model: a tight agenda, someone chairing along, another person taking minutes, meetings led by minutes rather than by people etc. As the team reaches maturity, their meetings gain enhanced momentum, adopting a more creative stance: Icebreakers, creativity activities, use of Kanban boards, utilising Huddle concepts, "Flash Meetings" within other meetings, ending the meetings in a positive note – and many other ingredients discussed here.

**Invite plus plus plus** – It is all about being inclusive and flexible on whom you will target as audience and participants. Do you fear the chaos entailed in having an "over-diverse" audience? You will be surprised with the inputs and ideas generated from different audiences and backgrounds: although a cohesive core group may help maintaining focus and a common language, a diverse and participative group can enhance point-of views and possibilities.

One real-life radical example: a team in East London often invites clients who raises complaints to be active part in their QI projects. Despite the challenges this brings, the results are uniquely positive.

It is all about finding how much diversity your project can handle – and embrace a wider or narrower mix in your crew.

**Adopt a bottom-up approach** - When the team takes ownership of the project, the whole team and the project gain a widely fresh and unique dynamic. Although most projects start up from initial discussions between few individuals, the overall team should gradually take ownership of the concepts, ideas and directions for the project. The sooner this happens, the faster the team will be involved, reverberating in ultimate results.



**Make it open access: invite other teams to participate in your meeting** – It is all about sharing and celebrating success.

**Gain buy-in: do not impose attendance** – No matter how tempting it is to label the attendance to a meeting as mandatory, any outcome derived from such imposition is likely to be short-lived (and the dis-benefits will usually outweigh eventual gains).

If you really need to reach a key person or audience, it is possibly worth to identify how your project can meet their needs or aspirations. Keep working, and soon your huddle will be a sought-after forum for ideas and projects.

**Dance with resistance** - If one colleague expresses frustration, it is likely that others feel the same.

There is a value on resistance: it is a great tool to identify what matters to people, to challenge our boundaries – and dispute our self-certainties.

**Do not shy away from doing the meeting with 2-3 people** – Only one person attended? We suggest the meeting to go ahead. It is always a chance to revisit your kanban board, together with keeping consistency and prevent the meeting to die away... and it is a great exercise of self-discipline.

**Have a co-facilitator** – A co-facilitator is more than a back-up; a co-facilitator is your ally for those difficult situations. Having co-facilitators regularly will help other members to develop into the facilitation role, giving flexibility and other longer-term gains and capability.

**Do not shy away from ideas and ideas and ideas that will pop up** – It is all about being flexible, and not having a tight agenda or aim. A tight agenda may hinder creativity.

**Keep the positive momentum** – Focus is essential; more essential, though, is keeping the positive momentum. Sometimes it is ok to let the meeting to drift towards the unexpected, in case this is the price of keeping the positive momentum rather than saying no – we never know where the unexpected may lead you.

**If it is not working, try something different, or try it again. But DO try it** – Keeping momentum is essential, even when things are not going that well. Carrying on, no matter what, helps maintaining the project moving on – until you find something to tweak and the positives start showing up.

**Cultivate a learning environment** – Results are certainly important; but in the end, what we learn is what remains. It is sometimes worth sacrificing short-term gains for the sake of longer-lasting learning and growth.

**Give an immediate positive flip into any negative tone that arises** – Momentum is usually the key that keep both positives and negatives flowing. Consequently, giving a positive flip to that negative cloud can be the difference between a successful narrative and an uncomfortable gloom. In such scenarios, the co-facilitator can be your perfect ally to validate your positive pitch – a partner to construct a new positive narrative over that negative note that quasi-emerged.

**Be creative/innovative** – This is the essence of QI

**Cultivate quirkiness and eccentricity** – This is not necessarily an ingredient for all QI Huddles (although good QI Huddles can be very quirky in essence).

**Strive for everyone to participate** – We shall aim for everyone to be minimally a driver, not just a passenger; if people do not feel included, they will drift away. As a minimum, finish the meeting by going around and giving everyone the opportunity to talk/been part etc.

**Keep the flow of ideas** – If ideas start drying up, you can always use [Nominal Group Technique](#), or keeping track of all ideas that come up.

**Be consistent... but do not be a slave of consistency** – Consistency is essential, but it should not plaster the team from trying different elements, dynamics and innovations.

**Use a Kanban Board** – This will deserve a sole chapter (follow us on Twitter for updates).

**What is your idea?** We would love you to reach out and share any other idea you may have as a key ingredient for a successful QI Huddle.

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