

Why

It is easy to lose sight of a company's main purpose given all the small and big problems that arise in the course of a day. However, when a strong purpose exists and becomes the heart and the driver of people's feelings and behavior then enormous energy and ownership will result.

What

A surprising but strong tool that involves giving a chair to your company's/team's purpose during meetings.

How

In any or at least important meetings include an empty chair that represents the company's or the team's main purpose. Explain the meaning of the chair to the participants of the meeting:

This chair represents the purpose of our company, which is to shape a digital lifestyle (for example).

There are different ways to use this chair:

- ⇒ Whenever someone feels that the company's/team's purpose has been violated or whenever someone has something crucial to say they go and sit in the chair. This person then gets a chance to speak after the current speaker has finished. When they have said their piece they return to their own chair and the meeting continues.
- ⇒ You can ask a few times or at least at the middle and at the end of the meeting who wants to sit in the chair and say something from the perspective of the company's/team's purpose.

When

When you want to make your company or team more purpose-driven. When you want to make sure that purpose is always present.

Critical success factors

Don't force it too much. Present it as tool you want to try.
Don't use the chair too often. In the beginning perhaps just try the chair as a way to evaluate the meeting from the perspective of the company's purpose. In that way you could end a meeting with: we had this empty chair present, who can I invite to say just a few words on this past meeting in the light of our main purpose?

Possible workshop exercise

Try the chair technique in training or during group work.