

Why

Most of us are so caught up in meetings, discussions and running around to get tasks done that we often lose sight of the real priorities and the important things in life and work.

What

Different ways of encouraging people to stop talking and doing and take some time to reflect.

How

Different possibilities:

- Start a meeting with one or two minutes of silence. You will be surprised by the different mood this creates in the meeting!
- You can do this as a free exercise (i.e. instructing attendees to take a few minutes to reflect on anything they want) or a focused exercise (e.g. today we are taking about our plans for the coming year, please take a minute to reflect on these).
- At a certain time every day ring a bell or give a signal and ask everyone to be silent for 10 minutes (imagine what kind of silent buzz this could produce!).
- Organize a mindfulness day each year. The practice of mindfulness involves being aware moment to moment of one's subjective conscious experience from a first-person perspective. When practicing mindfulness one becomes aware of one's stream of consciousness.
- Mindfulness is becoming increasingly popular and is now promoted by firms such as McKinsey & Company. To conduct a mindfulness day you need to hire an external practitioner unless you have a certified mindfulness trainer within the company (mindfulness is being practiced in companies more and more so you never know!).
- Of course, it could also be interested to offer other forms of meditation to your employees.

When

When you feel that the organization is too ad hoc, putting out all kinds of fires as they arise, and that more reflection is needed.

Skills and necessary training

None (although if you want to know more about mindfulness check the net). As previously stated, if you really want to apply mindfulness days or sessions then you need a trained facilitator.

Critical success factors

That everybody joins in, at least in terms of being silent. The silence is really needed to allow people to reflect. Also, explain why you think silence can be useful.

Possible workshop exercise

Try it! Start your workshop with a few minutes of silence. Do this immediately at the beginning or first present something striking about your topic and then give people a minute to be silent.