

Building a Pro-Dissent Organization

For Managers

Aim	Action
Be aware that power structures mean dissent is more risky for some staff	<p>Structure Meetings to maximize the number of voices heard. Eg. hold smaller group break-out meetings</p> <p>Provide a variety of outlets/mediums for people to be heard</p>
Value diversity and act like it	<p>Give credit for good ideas</p> <p>Seek out diverse opinions and diverse perspectives</p> <p>Hire for diverse backgrounds</p>
Maintain focus on shared purpose	<p>In all communication, reinforce the purpose of the work</p> <p>Make the connection between the employee and the user real and deep through community engagement</p> <p>Make purpose-driven decisions and be transparent about them</p>
Relinquish some of your power	<p>Only ask for input if it will actually influence decision-making</p> <p>Let yourself be outvoted</p>
Create a culture that values multiple perspectives even if it means more conflict and less efficient decision-making	<p>Be aware of and don't stand for group-think</p> <p>Let those who voice a minority opinion know that their input is valuable even if it doesn't change the majority decision</p> <p>Set a confident, calming tone when it comes to conflict: disagreement does not mean the sky is falling!</p>



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All Staff

Awareness/Action	Example
If a decision is being made too quickly, slow it down	<i>"I'm not sure if this is the right direction or not, but I'd really like to have a chance to speak with our users about how it would affect them. Can we revisit this next meeting when we know more?"</i>
If the majority are headed away from purpose, ask reframing questions	<i>"This policy change is great for funding, but we have a goal this year to remove barriers for immigrant community members. Will this actually create a new hurdle for them?"</i>
Notice which colleagues have not yet been heard and bring them in	<i>"James, you know our teen patrons really well, how do you think this will impact them?"</i>
If a colleague has an idea or raise a question that was never answered, return to it	<i>"Janet, you were the one who initially raised this question, do you feel like we've adequately addressed it?"</i>
If decisions being made without reference to impacts on related systems, raise questions	<i>"I know this would be good for our balance sheet, but will this put a strain on the homeless shelter?"</i>