



**Engage. Excite. Ignite. <sup>tm</sup>**

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## Money-Saving Meeting Formats

### 6 Creative Ways to Engage, Excite & Ignite your Audiences—on a budget

By Andrea Driessen, Chief Boredom Buster

If, in the current economic climate, you think you can't hold a best-in-class meeting, *think again*. Try one or more of these no- or low-cost, easy-to-implement meeting formats, and you'll quickly raise the bar on audience engagement and takeaway.

**Oh, and by the way....everyone will wonder how you pulled it off—  
on or under budget.**

Most of the following can be scheduled in *addition* to your "regularly scheduled programming" (i.e. keynoters, executive presentations, breakouts), OR offered *instead* to save money while you maximize meeting time.

#### 1. **Prancing with the Stars.**

Let's say you've invested in a speaker whom your event attendees are clamoring to see and deeply respect. In the weeks leading up to your meeting, hold a contest in which the top 20 or so winners [and perhaps your event sponsors] get their own intimate, elbow-rubbing reception and photo opp with this presenter while he's onsite. Timed right, this addition has a **FIVE-fold benefit**: It costs you almost nothing...generates huge event buzz....builds productivity (presuming that the contest is work related ;) ) .....creates a longtime memory among everyone who participates.....AND makes *you* the meeting hero.

#### 2. **Pecha Kucha.**

Sounding like a new tea leaf plucked from a tree in Mongolia, *Pecha Kucha* is actually Japanese for *chatter*. And as author Dan Pink writes in [Wired](#), "Get to the PowerPoint in 20 Slides Then Sit the [Heck] Down." It's all about fast-paced, furiously focused presentations that cover a specific topic in just 20 minutes. Read more about it [here](#).

3. **“60 Ideas in 60 minutes.”**

Banish boredom with this free, fast-moving, *no-room-for-boredom* session. First, choose a key challenge of great interest to your audience....AND a trained facilitator. Get a stop watch. Then invite to the stage your best experts (whether outside speakers, internal subject matter gurus, your customers—or a mix). Ready, Set, GO: each expert gets just ONE minute to provide a tip or idea on that subject....and BING!, we move to the next panelist until 60 minutes are up. EVERYONE gets practical strategies directly associated with the originally scheduled topic.

4. **Talk, Text, Twitter.**

Get the most mileage from your keynote or breakout—and keep the entire audience absorbed. People will talk, text and Twitter during sessions anyway. Why not give them a forum—AND boost the value of the session? Ask speakers to break for these submitted questions, or include a lively, “organic” Q&A right after the presentation, to bring the content “home.” [Contact us](#) to find out more about the technologies behind this concept.

5. **Ask the Expert Roundtables.**

Break up your standard (and boring!) meeting format with a roundtable instead of—or as a follow up to—a breakout or keynote. Ask already scheduled presenters, and/or others who fit with your agenda, to facilitate table top discussions based on your most relevant topics. Each “round” of these roundtables is just 20 minutes, so time is maximized and conversations BUZZ. At the sound of the bell, everyone moves to a different table. Many groups report these to be the highest rated programs of any meeting.

6. **Post-Program Pair-Up.**

After your speaker is finished, ask her or a company leader to elicit a challenge to the audience: **A.** Find a partner. **B.** Discuss what goal you will each reach in the next 60 days that’s related to the just-delivered keynote-- *and*, presumably, to your organizational mission. **C.** Record the goal—and your contact information—on paper. **D.** Exchange papers with your partner, and commit to supporting each other in reaching your goals in the next two months. **E.** If your audience is on the small size, take everyone’s commitments to an even higher level: Invite everyone to the mic to state their goal with the whole group. After all, committing to a target in public means you’re all the more likely to meet it.