The Flagpole Meeting
Gamify your team for better connection to your organisation

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Universities are large and complex organisations.

Flagpole meetings build new perspectives through:

• Mystery/Surprise
• Exploration
• Serendipity
Campus
What is the Problem?

• team is ‘far away’ from the campus
• interaction is through service calls, email and phone, seldom in person
• we often miss the mark - escalations
• bottom line – we don’t understand our ‘customers’ and they don’t understand us…
Basic steps to a ‘Flagpole’ meeting...

1. Set aside a regular 1 hour time slot for the team (fortnight/month)
2. Arrange an activity without revealing that activity to the team.
3. Advise the team of a Flagpole location (an easy landmark near the place to be visited) and time about 3-4 days prior to the meeting.
4. Reinforce that it is critical to be there on time (1pm timeslot works well after lunch)
5. Keep the detail of the activity secret for as long as possible – move as a team from the Flagpole location to the arranged activity
The Classroom

- Flipped Classroom
- Blended Learning Models
- Technology in Classrooms
- Delivery of ‘core’ subjects
Laboratories/ Specialist Spaces
• Specialist student learning labs
• Research labs
• Simulation spaces
Emerging Technologies
• Innovation Labs
• Research Centres
• Advanced Manufacturing Labs
• Researcher Lectures
Libraries

- History of the Organisation
- Collaboration spaces
- Learning/Research hubs
- Transformation
Galleries, Museums, Exhibitions

• Art
• Science
• Student work
• Researcher work
• Shows the diversity of the organisation
University Events

• Open Day
• Orientation Week
• University Conferences
What results can I expect?

• Develop team curiosity/excitement
• Build team resilience and collaboration (shared stories)
• Discoveries are reflected in future work
• Team will want to do more flagpole meetings...

• ’Customers’ can be turned from detractors to supporters (escalation)
• The team will be more open to visiting ‘customers’ in person
• Team members lead/suggest flagpole activities (shared responsibility)
What can go wrong?

• This is a psychological game
  • Understand your team
  • Be sensitive to their fears

• Build trust – ensure you start with ‘safe’ activities

• People may see this as playing around – reinforce that understanding the organisation is a key part of everyone’s job
Variations

• **Coffee shop stand up** – A variation on the Flagpole meeting where a weekly leadership team stand up occurs at a pre-arranged coffee shop and then moves on to explore a part of the university.

• **Escalations as inspiration** – If your team services a support queue and you get escalations from unsatisfied ‘customers’ from time to time, then use these to explore the context of that person’s work and build a flagpole meeting on the outcomes.
Thank You – Questions?