

Hot Button Seating Chart

Critical Meeting Preparations



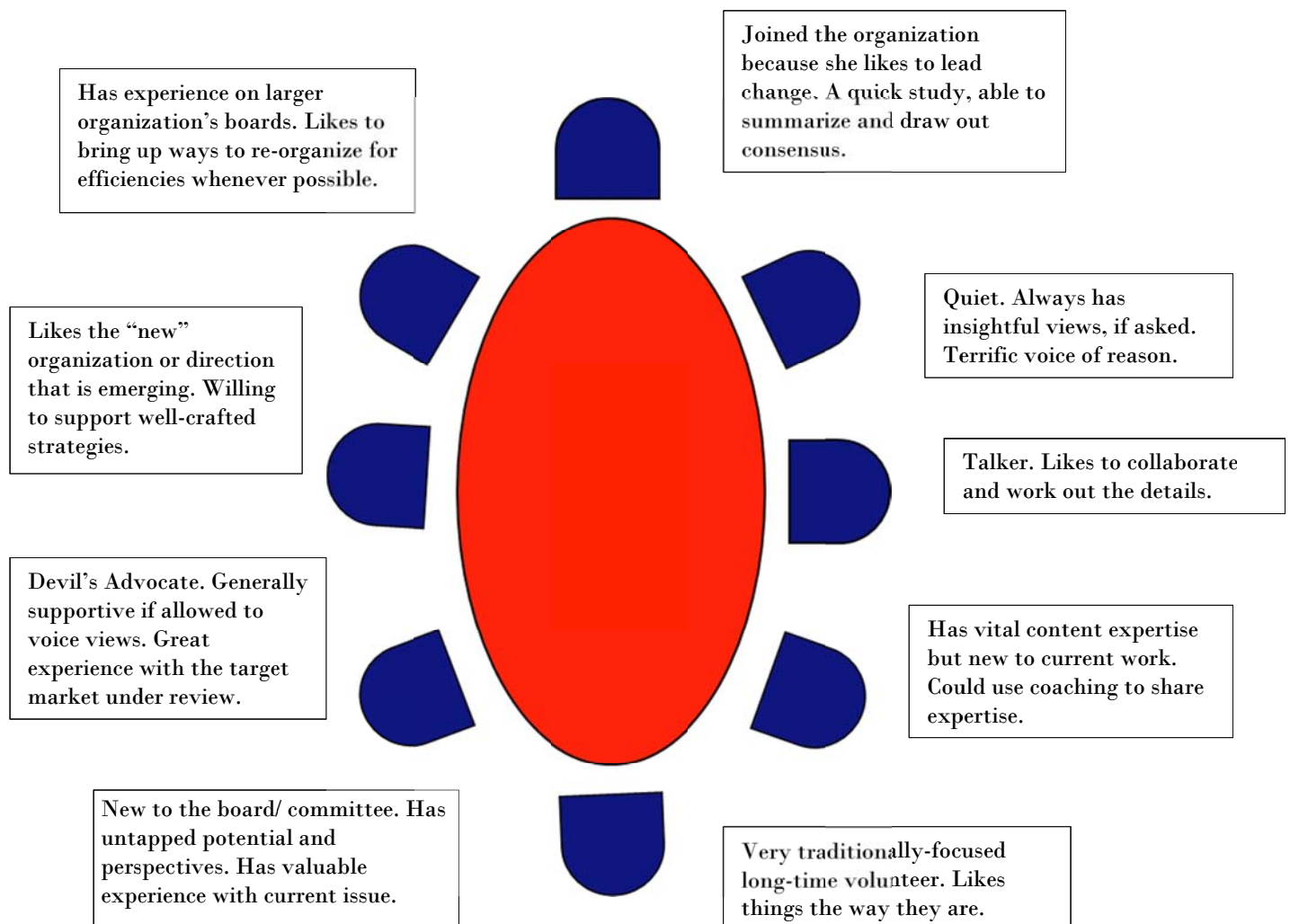
Critical Meetings Planning

Plan a “no surprise” meeting that will help move decisions forward.

Planning a “Hot Button” Seating Chart

For **VERY** important board or committee meetings (or just a very critical agenda item), perhaps ones for which emotions may run high or agreements have been slow, take time to think through each member’s perspectives by developing a “Hot Button” seating chart. Study the sample perspectives around the table for ideas. Then consider:

- What’s your end goal for the project? For the current meeting?
- Who are your champions for goal or for the recommendation on the table?
- Who can help refine proposed strategies with insight and finesse?
- Do you have sufficient and diverse perspectives at the table to ensure wise decisions and well-rounded input? Are there experts needed for certain perspectives (as guests or to add to the team)?
- Whom will be able to influence whom?
- What discussion steps will help bring out the most effective ideas and move things forward?
- How could staff prepare for each perspective and to help move the discussion along?



What other preparations might help with a very serious discussion?

- Create one seating chart for passions and specific areas of interests or expertise. Create a different seating chart reflecting personalities and relative abilities to engage productively.
- Consider an actual seating chart, putting people in assigned seats intentionally.
- Give up a traditional board-room style seating arrangement in favor of small group tables so members can dissect ideas and discuss in closer quarters. Quieter members may speak more freely. Focused attention is on the task at hand rather than a point and counterpoint style around a conference table.
- Ensure the decision points are clear ahead of time. But remain flexible as ideas emerge. Plan to emphasize the overall goal as needed.

"Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a minority of one." ~ Thomas Carlyle

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