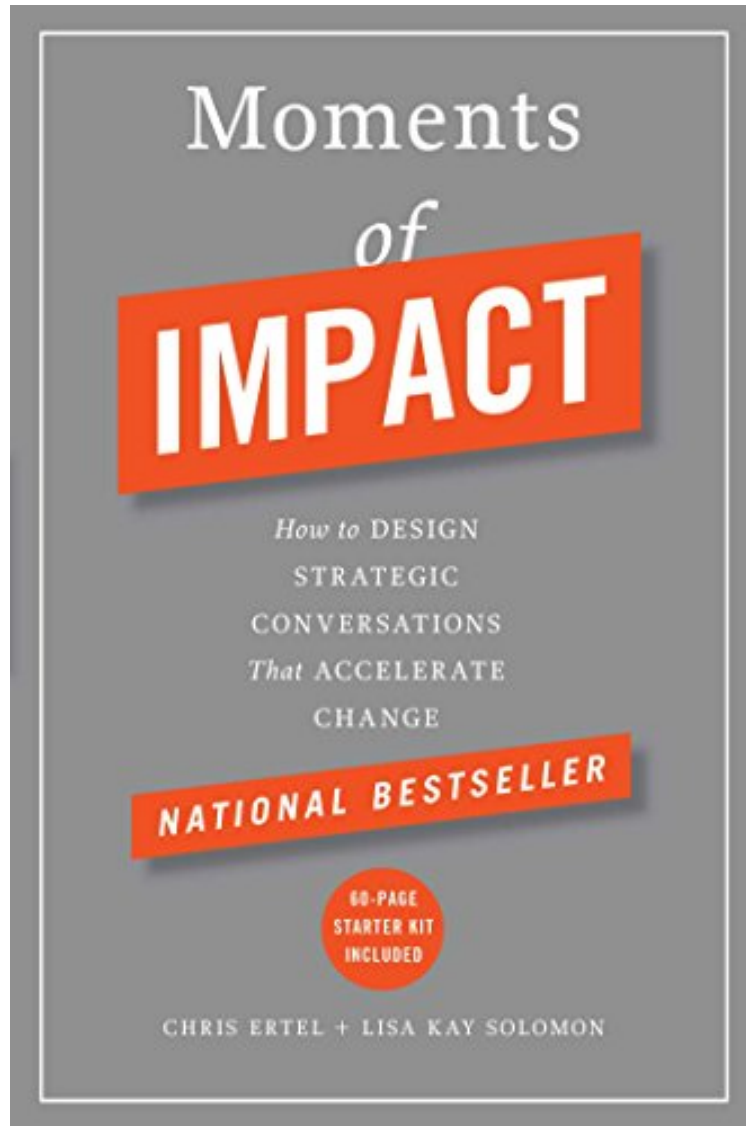


[Free] Moments of Impact: How to Design Strategic Conversations That Accelerate Change

Moments of Impact: How to Design Strategic Conversations That Accelerate Change

Chris Ertel, Lisa Kay Solomon

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Chris Ertel, Lisa Kay Solomon : Moments of Impact: How to Design Strategic Conversations That Accelerate Change before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moments of Impact: How to Design Strategic Conversations That Accelerate Change:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. The world we operate in today is a bit like an amusement parkBy Ian MannThe world we operate in today is a bit like an amusement park: it's full of thrilling rides—just not all of them are fun, authors Ertel and Solomon point out. The military have an official term for an environment like this,

the acronym VUCA - volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. In the world of business new competitors emerge suddenly and apparently out of nowhere: disruptive technologies destroy entrenched business models with frightening speed. Consider the Flip Video, an ultra-cheap video recorder that anyone could use. Developed in a small office above a jewellery store in downtown San Francisco, and costing a bit over \$ 100, it became the top-selling camcorder on .com within weeks of its launch. It stayed there for years against giants such as Sony. In March 2009, Cisco Systems acquired the producing company, Pure Digital Technologies for \$ 590 million. Just two years later, in April 2011, Cisco closed Flip. By then, low-cost video was becoming a ubiquitous feature inside mobile phones and cameras. That is the world of business today, a company can emerge from nowhere to market dominance, to a massive payday for the owners, and then back to oblivion in just four years. "Given the realities of a VUCA world, many leaders today are wary of traditional tools for strategy," say the authors, and so they should be. These tools were built largely for tackling very different issues in more stable times. (Michael Porter's hugely popular book "Competitive Strategy" came out in 1980, almost half a decade before you had a home fax, and 45 years before you got fibre in your office and home!) The idea of setting an enduring strategy still has strong appeal, but it is just not possible when the playing field keeps shifting and the goalposts won't stop moving. There are two types of challenges: technical and adaptive. Technical challenges require applying well-honed skills to well-defined problems, such as building a bridge or organizing a production line. They may be complex, and often are, but we can still resolve them with well-understood methods. Contrasting to the technical challenges are the adaptive challenges. These are messy, open-ended, and ill-defined. As such, even finding the right question is hard, let alone the right answer. Given the reality of a VUCA world, we must approach strategy less like mechanics and more like designers. The authors point out that it is "nearly impossible for any one senior executive or small leadership team to solve adaptive challenges alone. They require observations and insights from a wide range of people who see the world and your organization's problems differently. And they require combining these divergent perspectives in a way that creates new ideas and possibilities that no individual would think up on his or her own." This requires convening "strategic conversations", not meetings that produce "strategic plans". To deal with adaptive challenges, you must connect the best thinking and judgment of your best people, who might well disagree with each other. Convening such a meeting means going to great lengths and expense to bring together the best talent, different skills and backgrounds, so that the group can tackle our biggest challenges. When the enormity of the task is understood, it is little wonder that so many organizations retreat into the minimally successful, formulaic strategy workshops - again. Today, more than ever, strategy is conversation. However, we have so little guidance on how to do this well - either as participants or as leaders, and that is the value of this very practical book. "Moments of Impact" combines three disciplines: strategy, design, and conversations (or group dialogue). Much of the general format of a strategic conversation has the same requirements as does any good meeting. But strategic conversations must be executed so much better and so much more thoughtfully to get the desired results. You will need clear objectives, but not three bullet points. It could be a metaphor or some other framework the group can use to make some sense of a VUCA environment. "Running a radio station is like running a French patisserie in a city excited about Banting." The introductory framing of the core issue you need to unpack must be framed specifically for the time and competence you have available. Then you need ideal participants because it is they who are the key to a successful strategic conversation. The usual route is identifying a "dream team" but ending up with a "must-invite team" which only lowers the possibility of a successful outcome. The venue matters: "You wouldn't throw a kid's birthday party at a formal French restaurant - or propose marriage at a run-down pizza joint. So why do so many people choose to hold strategic conversations in spaces that aren't right?" the authors ask. There are clearly many subtle, but important aspects to hosting and facilitating a successful strategic conversation and the key concept is "design". Design is an approach to problem-solving that aims at addressing users' often unarticulated needs through disciplined creativity. A well-designed strategic conversation doesn't just "look nice"; it works smoothly and effectively often in ways that you can sense intuitively but may not even articulate. "This effect can be found in the way Herman Miller's Aeron chair gives you firm support while allowing you room to move and breathe. It can be found in the way a Michelin-star restaurant delivers a seamless dining experience," the authors explain. Pierre Wack, best remembered for bringing scenario planning from the military to the business sector, pioneered the art of strategic conversation as a discipline and practice. Wack realized that well-designed strategic conversation also requires attention to the emotional and psychological experience of participants. We need to focus much more on their mind-set and concerns. As Michael Schrage said: "The whole purpose of a strategic conversation is not just to have a good conversation about strategy. It's about getting to a framework for the alignment of behaviours that help you get to the outcomes that you need." A strategic conversation doesn't just happen, and everything you design into your meeting speaks. Your task is to see it sends the right message.

Readability Light --- Serious Insights High +---
Low Practical High +--- Low

*Ian Mann of Gateways consults internationally on leadership and strategy and is the author of the recently released The Executive Update. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Powerful and lucid pragmatic guide for both newbies experts By Z. Li I highly recommend this book to anyone trying to lead and

spur effective change in an organization (whether business, non-profit or otherwise) or community in the face of future uncertainties, challenges, opportunities etc. - it's not just for management consultants and Fortune 500 executives. The book is packed with a great variety and range of insights about how to create and maintain effective "strategic conversations" to address these issues, drawing upon the authors' decades of consulting experience and a well-curated range of expert sources in strategy, design, and group dynamics (their recommended readings list itself is really a sort-of-hidden gem). There is a ready-to-go starter kit section convenient for users who want an easy pared-down reminder guide to how to implement their approach. But whether you're a newbie or expert, I strongly recommend that you take the time to read the essay chapters which are entertaining and clear - they will quickly give you a deep grounding in understanding why the book's approach is powerful, and they're full of real-life case studies with concrete lessons. As the authors point out, this is not a quick-fix approach, and perfecting the art of strategic conversation creation to what they call "black belt" level can take many years of experience. But their book convincingly portrays this journey of learning as one which is both intellectually rich and offers great emotional and professional satisfaction in helping others achieve breakthroughs.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Practical, witty, strategic and engaging

By Lisa Brooklyn I thought this was an excellent book. Super accessible, engaging writing with great examples. Practical advice broken down into simple frameworks to remember things by. It was obvious that the authors approached the task as they would a strategic conversation in real life — and I appreciated the thoughtfulness they brought to considering how to share their expertise with others. The authors have definitely written this with the corporate world in mind and it is definitely not a 'design thinking' book but more about bringing a mindfulness to the goals and how to realize them when planning critical strategic conversations. I am a design professor so I wasn't thinking of how to use this in a corporate setting (or for non-designers) and even though my students and I were not the target audience I still found the content incredibly constructive.

Moments of Impact is a book on a mission: to eradicate time-sucking, energy-depleting workshops and meetings. In our fast-changing world, organizations have important challenges and opportunities to address — and no time to waste. Moments of Impact delivers the single most useful resource for managers and leaders who need better strategic conversations — now — to shape the future of their organizations. Moments of Impact is an essential guide for ambitious leaders who get assigned the hardest and most vexing strategic issues in their organizations, for entrepreneurs trying to manage board expectations, for social change agents pioneering new business models for community impact, for hopeful educators and healthcare practitioners trying to transform slow-to-change industries, and for enterprising students committed to tackling global challenges. Drawing on decades of combined experience as innovation strategists, Ertel and Solomon articulate the purpose, principles, and practices of well-designed strategic conversations. They weave together a lively and compelling mix of social science theories and research, interviews with more than 100 thought leaders, organization leaders, and practitioners, as well as dozens of anecdotes and practical cases from diverse organizations. The book also includes a sixty-page Starter Kit with diagnostic questions, best practices, tips and suggestions, and recommended readings to enable you to put the ideas to work immediately.

From Booklist In this book about meetings — and designing them for productivity and impact — Ertel and Solomon have crafted a compelling methodology to making critical decisions in any company. Specifically, their dialogues are focused on who we are, where we're going, and how we will get there. In so doing, they transform the "OMG, not another two-day session" into a time to truly ponder and shape the future. The construct, on the surface, is simple: five principles (all of which have to be present) must be incorporated, from defining the purpose and engaging multiple perspectives to frame issues, setting the scene, and making it an experience. More telling are the all-too-vibrant case histories of companies that have experienced the doom loop, such as Flip Video (after its acquisition by Cisco Systems) and Encyclopaedia Britannica, damaged by Wikipedia and other competitors. The authors do a darn good job of stepping readers through the process (especially since there is a starter kit included), but they also make the text a bit more complicated and meandering than needed. --Barbara Jacobs

Unknown Strategy is one of the most over-used, poorly understood words in the business lexicon. Ertel and Solomon set out to make it meaningful again, drawing on decades of experience running real strategic conversations. (Clay Shirky, author of Here Comes Everybody and Cognitive Surplus) If you are even remotely interested in 1) having a team that knows what each other is doing, 2) delivering a complex message in a clear way, 3) making sense of the mania that passes for so much of "business thinking" these days, you must read this book. (Dan Roam, author of The Back of the Napkin and Blah Blah Blah) Solomon and Ertel get it. We need to move beyond the blah blah blah dominating our meeting rooms today. We need strategic conversations - this book shows you how to design them. (Alexander Osterwalder, author of Business Model Generation and Business Model You) They say insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. I say that's also a pretty good definition of the typical business meeting. If you'd like to short-circuit the meeting loop and energize your team's ability to solve real problems and create new visions, then Moments of Impact is the book you need. (Daniel H. Pink, author of To Sell is Human and Drive) So many times organizations go to the outside to develop and refine their strategic

plans when the answers lie internally. Moments of Impact gives you a roadmap to unlock solutions that are literally in the room. It provides powerful examples and a step by step guide to creating intense engagement and encourages diverse and unique points of view. This leads to a powerful shared vision and strategic plan coupled with a pragmatic execution plan. And, as a bonus, it is a great bonding experience for all involved. (George Borst, CEO of Toyota Financial Services)What if conversations at work actually mattered? Moments of Impact shows how they can, offering an actionable model for sparking creativity and driving change. (Adam Grant, Wharton professor and bestselling author of Give and Take)Conversations are how groups of people learn, collaborate and act together, but having powerful, coherent and strategic conversations takes active design and support. Chris Ertel and Lisa Solomon collaborators of mine for many years have provided a practical and insightful guide to shaping consequential strategic conversations. A must read for anyone shaping the decision environment of an organization. (Peter Schwartz, author of The Art of the Long View and co-founder of GBN)Stories ignite understanding and engagement on our most important strategic challenges. Moments of Impact reveals how to go beyond data-driven meetings to generate new insights that help change our world for the better. (Nancy Duarte, CEO of Duarte Design, author of Resonate and Slide:ology)We've seen how the power of design can radically change experiences for the better. Moments of Impact shows how design can transform our strategic conversations, too. 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You can apply many of their tips to general meetings as well. Refreshingly, Ertel and Solomon remind readers that diversity comes in many forms--all of which are important in business settings.rdqquo; (Inc.com)ldquo;Brillianthellip; I commend Ertel and Solomon on their skillful presentation of material that focuses on various key practices: Define Your Purpose, Engage Multiple Perspectives, Frame the Issues, and Make It an Experience. In this instance and indeed throughout the book, they identify a lsquo;whatrsquo; and then devote most of their attention to explaining lsquo;howrsquo; and lsquo;why.rsquo;rdquo; (BobMorris.biz)ldquo;Any book about how to run better meetings deserves your attention. Ertel and Kay make it easy, with actual tool and checklists that will prove fast and practical to you and your top team, every time out.rdqquo; (Inc.com)ldquo;Logical, methodical, and specific to supporting strategic thinking. I believe mastery of the principles outlined would be beneficial in running any type of meetinghellip;.Using this book as a starting point can give the novice leader insight and confidence to attempt the goal of trying something new with people.rdqquo; (Creativityresearch.blogspot.com) Strategy is one of the most over-used, poorly understood words in the business lexicon. Ertel and Solomon set out to make it meaningful again, drawing on decades of experience running real strategic conversations. (Clay Shirky, author of Here Comes Everybody and Cognitive Surplus)If you are even remotely interested in 1) having a team that knows what each other is doing, 2) delivering a complex message in a clear way, 3) making sense of the mania that passes for so much of "business thinking" these days, you must read this book. (Dan Roam, author of The Back of the Napkin and Blah Blah Blah)Solomon and Ertel get it. We need to move beyond the blah blah blah dominating our meeting rooms today. 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