

Mission Moment Ideas

The Foraker Group did not invent this concept, but we are true believers. Mission moments are not just fluff, they set the stage for everyone in the room to get grounded to the mission and the agenda of the meeting. At their best, mission moments can also create a more level playing field for engagement. A solid mission moment has these characteristics:

- It inspires us to think.
- It connects us to our feelings.
- It brings us closer to the truth.
- It holds us together for the difficult decisions we have to make.
- It engages everyone in the room in some concrete way.

The whole experience is 5-15 minutes at the beginning of the meeting, but in those minutes we are setting the stage for why this work matters, why the meeting matters, and why we are all in a room together. Be sure to place it on the agenda and assign a discussion leader, which is often the board chair, but not always.

Options for crafting your mission moment:

Internal options:

Depending on time, either ask everyone to share or work in pairs or small teams. If you use pairs or small teams, ask for a few to share in the full group.

- Ask an open-ended question that everyone answers in the room like “what are you seeing right now in your community that impacts our work?”
- Ask everyone to tell a one-minute (or less) story about the last time they saw mission in action or a core value in action since the last time you met.
- In small teams, ask the team to tell a personal story about their current connection to mission.
 - First significant mission connect – focus on why it mattered/what made it significant.
 - Last significant mission connect – focus on why it mattered/what made it significant.
- Use an object to make a connection through metaphor for how a personal value and an organizational value are connected – or how that object reminds a person of what mission success could look like.
 - Bring an object from home.
 - Bring an object from the outside environment.
 - Pick an object you are wearing.

- Pick a letter of the alphabet.
- Take a “temperature check” and ask everyone for their one word about how they are feeling in the moment about the state of your mission, goals, etc.
- Have the board chair share their mission connection story with staff or have a staff person (not the CEO) share their mission connection story with the board. Have a volunteer speak to either group.

External Options:

Pick a person to share based on the theme of the meeting or the tone you want to set.

Be sure to fully prepare the guest for success by providing guidelines and expectations.

- Pick a person to offer a first-hand account of mission in action.
- Pick a person to offer a second-hand experience with mission (donor, vendor, funder).
- Pick a key collaborator to share how mission impact is deeper or more effective.

Other options:

- Share a video of mission impact for your organization, or another with a similar or complementary mission.
- Share positive letters written to the organization.
- Celebrate philanthropy and engage in a donor acknowledgement activity like writing letters or making a thank you gift that connects the donor to mission.
- Take a tour of a mission activity.