

Using Mission Moments to Connect Your Team – A Guide for Your Meetings

Disclaimer: This document is not intended as legal advice. Your organizational goals, purpose, bylaws, and values should drive the creation of this document.

The Foraker Group did not invent the concept of a mission moment, but we are true believers in using these moments to stimulate connection and interest between the board and the mission they steward. 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 from your board and staff teams.

A solid mission moment can have these **results**:

- It inspires us to think about how mission affects others.
- It connects us to our feelings about mission and why it matters on a personal level.
- It brings us closer to seeing the truth of the challenges, opportunities, gaps, and possibilities of the mission.
- It holds us together for the difficult decisions we have to make.
- It engages everyone in the room in a concrete way.
- It allows us to see potential partnerships and bigger ways to create lasting change.

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, who 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 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 or a core value in action since the last time you met.
- In small teams, ask everyone to tell a personal story about their current connection to mission.

- First significant mission connection – focus on why it mattered or what made it significant.
 - Last significant mission connection – focus on why it mattered and what made it significant.
- Use an object as a metaphor to show 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 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: (Be sure to fully prepare the guest for success by providing guidelines and expectations.)

- Pick a person to share based on the theme of the meeting or the tone you want to set.
- Pick a person to offer a first-hand account of the mission in action.
- Pick a person to offer a second-hand experience with the mission (donor, vendor, funder).
- Pick a key collaborator to share how the mission impact is deeper or more effective.

Other options:

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