

**GUIDELINES
FOR
EXECUTIVE ROUND TABLE LUNCHTIME DISCUSSION**

One form of on-going communication during organizational changes is the informal conversations with executives and staff. These guidelines were developed for a client hosting monthly lunch time discussions during such times.

- Welcome and thank them for coming. Introduce yourself and briefly describe what you do. Encourage them to do the same.
- Make sure you know their name, title and where they work. Ask questions such as ‘Tell me what you do and what like best about it’ or other positive questions.
- Set the example encourage them to eat the lunch (many are too polite to eat in front of you).
- If questions have been submitted ahead of time use them as conversation starters. Organize them into similar subjects. Ask for clarification if necessary, but don’t ask who submitted which questions.
- Respond to the question to the best of your knowledge. Don’t guess. Some see you as the ultimate source of facts or decisions.
- Share the ‘public’ information. Describe what that means. Honestly state why other information must be kept confidential.
- Let them know where to go for further detail or information.
- Confirm that the question has been addressed before going to the next question.
- Often follow-up questions are generated. Respond to these questions, yet manage your time to ensure you address all the questions that were submitted.
- As other questions are asked, listen to the whole question; don’t interrupt. If it is lengthy summarize the question(s) before starting to respond. Listen for the concern behind the question. If any doubt, ask, “What is your concern in asking about that?”
- Often a question may really be a lead-in to make a suggestion. Ask or probe for the concern or idea behind the question.

- Remember, you don't have to do all the talking. A moment or two of silence may seem like an eternity to you, but it provides time for others to think and formulate a comment or question.
- Mind the time. Let them know when there is 5 minutes left.
- Following the Roundtable, summarize the questions and your answers for the knowledge bank (if one is being kept).

Types of Questions to Expect:

- ◆ Long-term business strategy – i.e., Where are we headed in the next 3-5 years?
Review CEO's Shareholder presentation for main points
Briefly list the trends and your organization's strategies for competing in the marketplace
- ◆ Career-related – "What career opportunities will I have?" "What are the career paths?"
- ◆ Functional alignment and responsibilities – "How will the 'XYZ' group work with Information Management?" "How will 'ABC' be aligned with 'DEF'?"
- ◆ Outsourcing – "What groups will be outsourced and when will we know?"
- ◆ New organization or function – "What does it look like and how does it work?" "What will my role be?"
- ◆ Benefits – "When can we take Friday afternoons off, again?" "Can we get parking paid at the new location?" or "How can we set up more telecommuting and working from home opportunities?"
- ◆ Specific Project status and goals – i.e., "What's happening with the merger/acquisition?"