



open space technology

- *Friday, November 10, 2006 at 4–5 P.M.: Open Space Orientation, BALLROOM I, 2ND FLOOR*
- *Saturday, November 11, 2006 at 2–4:10 P.M.: Open Space Convenes, BALLROOM I, 2ND FLOOR.*
Breakout rooms will be designated

Open Space Technology (OST) is a way to bring people together to share ideas, best practices, and current news—a way to connect people in a structured, yet open and free process. On Friday afternoon from 4–5 P.M., there will be a call for ideas/sessions/issues. The person who suggests the idea simply writes it on a piece of paper, announces it to the group, then selects a time and a room to meet. This person is responsible for showing up, not for leading the entire discussion.

We will have Open Space on Saturday afternoon from 2–4:10 P.M. There are numerous spaces available to meet, and these will be posted in advance in our main convening area.

You get out of it what you put into it, and you seek out those sessions and people with whom you'd like to engage in conversation. It's that simple.

The Four Principles of Open Space Technology

1. **Whoever comes are the right people.** It is not how many people show up, but rather the fact that they share a passion about the issue(s) at hand. Participation is voluntary.
2. **Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.** This principle reminds participants not to focus on what might, could, or should have been, and anchors us firmly in “what is-right now.”
3. **Whenever it starts in the right time.** When it comes to creative interchange and spirited inquiry, the clock is not the final arbiter. Things start when they are ready. Not before, and not later.
4. **When it's over it's over.** Don't waste time when the moment has passed. Move on to something useful.

The One Law (The Law of Mobility, formerly known as the Law of Two Feet)

If you find yourself in a situation where you are neither learning nor contributing, it is your responsibility to use The Law of Mobility and go someplace else to use your time more productively.

How it Works (in brief)

- Participants gather for the opening session. Anyone who feels so inspired can offer one or more sessions by announcing the title of the session and his/her name, and choosing a room and timeslot.
- Participants sign up for the sessions that they wish to attend. Much negotiating usually occurs at this point: for example, similar sessions may collapse into one, or rescheduled to avoid time conflicts.
- Participants then pursue what interests them, attending sessions, or being a bumblebee (moving from session to session, cross-pollinating) or a butterfly (enjoying spontaneous conversations on the fringes).

Open Space is NOT

- A brainstorming session (rather, people discuss their heartfelt concerns).
- A glorified suggestions session (the emphasis is on taking personal responsibility).
- A complaints session (ditto).
- A ‘jolly’ (Open Space involves high play, but also high learning).
- Total anarchy (there is appropriate structure and appropriate control).