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A Breakthrough: Meeting Design Comes Of Age In The High-Tech Era — *Virtuous Meetings*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA (Fall 2014)—Many books detail how to lead a productive meeting with 8 to 12 people in a room, or even 40 to 50. ***Virtuous Meetings: Technology + Design for High Engagement in Large Groups***, by Karl Danskin and Lenny Lind, is the first book to show how to keep every individual *active and productive* in meetings of 300 to 400—or even 3,000 to 4,000. The days of one person standing up in front of a group and talking, while the meeting “audience” passively listens, are over. Using technology, meeting participants today are being given a radical new role in generating group solutions.

“If an organization’s goal in gathering people together is to foster collaboration, cross-pollinate for innovation, or quickly respond to disruptive forces, offering the technology that enables people to have a voice and contribute is essential,” say veteran meeting designers Danskin and Lind..

How does a meeting become virtuous? By creating the best possible use of every person’s time and creating outcomes that reflect the ideas, feelings, and aspirations of all the participants. Danskin and Lind bring 2 x 20 years of experience in interactive meeting design to bear on the question of how large groups can operate in today’s environment as high-performance teams. And in their first book together, they offer a surprising conclusion: it’s the use of technology, when embedded in a specific engagement process, that allows people in large meetings to spend much of their time in productive, small-group conversations.

This new style of meeting design integrates personal communication technologies that have arisen in the last few years. In ***Virtuous Meetings***, the authors offer example after example of how this new kind of meeting process is being used around the world by large organizations and international stakeholder forums.

Virtuous Meetings cuts through the “technology noise” that now surrounds us—with myriad meeting apps, Twitter, and other tools flooding the meeting market. “The latest technology won’t amount to much, if all it means is that people will be watching a remote video feed at the same time or will be able to ask questions of the speaker over their smartphone,” declare Danskin and Lind. This is the first book to deliver a clear, concise description of how to use technology to enable participants in large meetings to spend most of their time in face-to-face conversations.

In business, in government, in international forums, gaining consensus and building solutions with a large group of people is critical. Around the world, meeting designers are

embracing the participant-centered style for large meetings, where the participant's voice is at the center of the meeting experience. In 2014, it is unacceptable for the participant to be a tiny member of a vast, silent "audience." *Virtuous Meetings* is a practical guide to understanding what the alternative is and how it works.

Some of the topics explored in *Virtuous Meetings* include:

- An examination of the difference between front-of-the-room-centered and participant-centered meeting design.
- A new model of thinking about large meetings: two levels of participant experience—table group and whole group.
- Simple steps of the Virtuous Engagement Cycle to generate real alignment and ownership in large groups by means of small group discussion.
- The use of technological connectivity to enable "parallel processing" activity that eliminates the need for time consuming "breakouts" and repetitive "report outs."

Virtuous Meetings shows readers how to implement available technology wisely in meetings of any size. The authors speak from the front lines, with "Case Story" features and "View from Inside the Meeting" vignettes that share the most important lessons culled from their years of experience pioneering the integration of technology into large meeting design.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lenny Lind is the founder, chairman, and senior consultant of Covision, a 29-year-old San Francisco-based process design consulting firm that pioneered the use of technology and design for high engagement in large meetings. A former pilot, photographer and video producer, he coauthored the bestselling *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*.

Karl Danskin is the long-time head of strategy and thought leadership at Covision, where he employs his extensive global experience in meeting design to create the world's most productive meetings. Formerly the artistic director of two San Francisco theater companies, he is also a life-long student and teacher of classical Chinese arts. *Virtuous Meetings: Technology + Design for High Engagement in Large Groups* is Danskin and Lind's first book together.

Learn more at: www.virtuousmeetings.com and follow the authors on Twitter: @karldanskin and @lennyind

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Virtuous Meetings: Technology + Design for High Engagement in Large Groups

By Karl Danskin & Lenny Lind

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