

Volunteer Role: Theme Catchers

How many?

Minimum 3 volunteers, maximum 6 volunteers

Ideally the Theme Catchers won't have other duties to attend to so they can stay focused in their key observation role (e.g. imagine a wedding photographer; optimal for them to focus on the photography instead of moving chairs, welcoming guests, answering questions, handling the guest book etc).

Key skills?

Observers, listeners, noticing what is emerging, reading the energy and reaction in the room, comfortable chatting with strangers, popping into conversations, asking questions, and writing short reflective blog posts.

The role?

Attend all the sessions, catching the gist of things, working with Theme Catcher worksheets to harvest the themes emerging. Some helpful tips on Theme Catching:

1. Welcoming a Punchy Attitude: participate and observe, looking for "what really happened". What would you tell a friend at the bar?
2. You Don't Have to Get It All: busting the myth that you have to capture everything and summarize. You do have to pay attention to what's important.
3. Everything Is and Offer: stay in your creativity and what you have to offer.
4. Follow the Spark of Yes: notice what comes alive in the room during the keynotes, presentations and sessions.
5. Watch for What Resonates: notice points at which there is affirmation or recognition of what is being shared. Sometimes these are obvious because they are marked by laughter or a spike in energy.

We aren't preparing summaries or a neat and tidy synthesis of the conference events.

We aren't taking copious notes each day.

We aren't looking for something 'perfect'.

We are creating something less linear, more emergent.

We are looking for the different key parts of the whole experience, to notice what is happening in the room and what is shifting.

We are harvesting words, energy, and images.

What are the Theme Catcher worksheets?

The Theme Catcher worksheets will invite words and/or images on what themes are emerging. Questions on the worksheet might include:

1. What's practical (two or three issues relevant now)
2. What's innovative (two or three ideas that point to emerging paradigms)
3. What's the headline (for the story of this presentation)
4. What's the connection (this headline to the practice of leading shifts)
5. What's the vibe (that you heard from participants)
6. What's the gem (that you'll remember, really, in ten years)
7. What are the questions (one or two questions sparked)
8. What is comfortable that is shifting?
9. What is uncomfortable that is shifting?
10. What is it that we know about shift happening that we didn't know 61 years ago?

What happens with the worksheets?

- We will huddle up with Avril, our amazing graphic recorder, who will harvest "Themes from Day 1" etc to create a little graphic recording chart that will be shared out in Conversation Alley.
- Amanda will also harvest questions and sparks to share out with the crowd.
- We might prepare some Wordles for showing to the group, or create other artistic displays from them.
- Each Theme Catcher will be invited to prepare a short post on what they noticed each day. The posts will go out on the LinkedIn Group and shared out on Conversation Alley each night.
- Amanda will also draw from them to create a 'meta harvest' of the themes in a narrative thread on the final day of the conference.

Time Commitment:

- We'll have one group meet-up in person before the conference to share the background, context, info about their roles, review the Theme Catching worksheet etc. this would happen an evening of the week of September 27th (date, location and time TBD)
- I will also reach out and connect 1x1 with each of them for a introduction phone call prior to the meet-up, and will have a welcome email with information for them to peruse before the group meet-up.
- Attend the whole conference including the registration night, arriving early (before the conference begins) for huddle-ups and staying late (after the conference ends) for end-of-day huddle-ups with me. Times TBD.