

## **Be Heard. Be Noticed. Be Valued. Be Yourself.**

Sometimes it can feel like no one listens to you. Or worse, that you are being ignored. At some point it might build up to a feeling of being undervalued. How can you ensure your voice is heard and that you feel positive about your contributions? Here are a few ideas you could try out in your next meeting (remember, these things take time though, so we recommend becoming comfortable with one or two ideas first).

### **Eye contact and nodding.**

In normal, everyday life, it's important to make eye contact with the person or persons you are addressing, even if only briefly – staring contests can be awkward.

Be seen to be nodding as you are being addressed, and to see others nodding as you are talking. It ensures someone is listening to you, not just hearing you.

In our remote-working life this can be difficult. But we all have video and audio right? So, when listening to someone, un-mute. Verbally nod, *okay, yes, I see*. If you are comfortable, switch on your camera. Nod, smile, shake your head, grimace, wave.

### **Start as you mean to go on.**

How often do you get to the end of a speech, only to find that the person you are talking to was not listening. Their fault? Maybe not.

Start a directed sentence with the person's name, or the subject of the sentence. It's like making eye contact, but audibly.

Starting with a name puts the important person in the frame, ensuring they are on board right away. Starting with the subject piques multiple interests, puts the important or interested people in the frame.

*Bob, what do you think of this idea?*

*Jane, how did you get on with the plan we talked about?*

*You know the Beanstalk Project? Have we decided...?*

### **End a chat with a call to action (CTA).**

We do this a lot with emails but this approach works well with Slack and also Google Meet's meeting chat. We like to give other members of the group a task, a job, an action. Even non-physical actions are actions.

End your dialogue with an action or a directed question – *engage* a response..

*I thought it would be a good idea to add this to the design.*

*Grandma, would that be a problem?*

*Goose, can you help me out with that?*

### **Talk to the hand.**

You have a burning itch to add something to the conversation: it's important, life changing, magnificent.

Interrupting an already flowing conversation with your thoughts risks your voice being lost. The original conversation sometimes has a tendency to have more momentum than your interrupt.

Use the hand. It's been said before but, raise your hand and wait, or make a note of what you were going to say, and simply share it at the end, when you get the chance. This approach gives you time to build your story.

*So, you know where you were on about selling beans to that kid? What if you tried adding peas as well? I think it would make a smaller beanstalk and cause lots less trouble overall.*

### **Back each other up.**

Use your clout to make others feel valued.

Add supporting comments. Lend weight to an opinion.

*I just wanted to say I agree with the Giant. Great idea about swapping beans for peas.  
You can be heard simply by agreeing with (or not) someone.*

### **Including people.**

Running a session where people are quiet, not involved, not interested?

Give them a nudge, a gentle poke.

*Hey, Goose. This is right up your alley, so to speak. What do you think about peas, huh?*

### **We don't all like being nudged.**

Running a session where people are quiet, not involved, not interested?

Don't worry about it.

We are all different. We don't all need to be nudged or poked or stroked all the time.

Also note that if someone is quiet, it does not always mean that the person is not interested or wanting to be involved. Some people need more time to process information and that processing time often doesn't happen during the meeting. To ensure an inclusive approach, encourage thoughts after meetings too.

### **Body Language.**

*Back to the camera.*

Leaving your camera on means people can see your body language. They can see when you are surprised, or shake your head or smile.

Everyone can see how engaged you are on a particular subject or theme.

Without it, you may be inadvertently missed out.

With it you can be noticed.

*I noticed Jack looked well happy when I mentioned not using beans anymore. I didn't know he was that bothered by them until then. He gave us all the thumbs up and did a happy dance and everything.*

### **Hang Around.**

Leaving a meeting running can be really useful if you want to just chat about your ideas. Invite certain people to stay around so you can air your thoughts without feeling you are hijacking everyone's valuable time.

It can feel less formal, and you might find it easier to get your point across in a more relaxed manner.

### **Just because you were ignored doesn't mean you were ignored.**

It's a busy place out there and we all have a lot going on.

Sometimes we're simply missed, not necessarily ignored.

### **Just because you were ignored doesn't mean you were wrong.**

Did you join a meeting to find a design change that you talked about the day before, that no one listened to, is being implemented?

You could point out that it was indeed you that had the idea.

You could just take pride in the knowledge that the idea you came up with was in fact good.

### **Just because you were ignored multiple times doesn't mean you should be ignored more multiple times.**

Be brave.

At some point you need to point out your contributions.

*I'm glad we decided to go with that idea. I thought it was good when I mentioned it. Winky face*

Bring it up in 121s.

*I've had a few good ideas now that were implemented but I'm not sure people realise my*

*contributions.*

*I'll mention it to your immediate manager and team that it was nice to see your ideas contributing.*

Summary:

**Be Yourself. Be Valued. Be Noticed. Be Heard.**