



The World Café: Part One

By Dr. Alexander Schieffer, David Isaacs, and Bo Gyllenpalm

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The World Café is becoming something of a full-fledged movement in the organizational change arena. Originated in the USA by Academy Fellow Juanita Brown and her partner, David Isaacs, in the early 1990s, it is living up to its name as it expands throughout the globe.

The following article synthesizes our experiences and insights with the World Café to answer these and other questions.

The World Café is a user-friendly method for creating meaningful and cooperative dialogue around questions that count. As an organizational or social design process the World Café offers a practical way to enhance the human capacity for collaborative thought. Born out of the worldwide interest in dialogue methodologies and readily applicable to organizations and communities, it catalyzes dynamic conversations and opens new possibilities for action.

One simple awareness has catalyzed the growing success of the World Café: the way human beings talk with one another and engage in conversations often leads neither to a better understanding nor to improved cooperation. Rather,

it can cause misunderstandings and even conflict. Acknowledging this unfortunate human tendency, the pioneers of the World Café chose to closely examine our capacity to talk and listen to each other in conversation.

III. What is the philosophy behind the World Café?

Among the most important underlying beliefs that guide the World Café are:

- Each person has his/her own interpretation of the world, based on mental models constructed in his/her own conceptual reality. While this perspective of reality may be valid, it subjectively represents only one individual's perceptions. Only by sharing one's own viewpoint and by learning about alternative interpretations can individuals and organizations broaden their understanding of the various alternatives for action. The more options an individual or an organization can articulate, the greater the opportunity to develop successful adaptation strategies to an ever-changing environment.
- By providing the opportunity for shifting collective thinking, the World Café thus provides the opportunity for changing the status quo in areas that truly matter. Ultimately, World Café is not only a process for sharing world views, but also a tool that creates the context for collective action.
- Any system has the internal ability to develop successful survival and adaptation strategies. Organizations already possess the wisdom, the knowledge, and the creativity required to confront even the most difficult challenges. The contextual focus of a World Café enables participants to access and use these resources. Café conversations allow participants to experience their collective capability. Most organizations do not suffer from having too few smart people: they suffer from their inability to fully activate and mobilize the collective wisdom resident within their own system.
- People want to contribute, engage, and act. If an organization provides a credible space for focused intention and shared learning, as well as acknowledging and appreciating everyone's contribution, individuals develop a strong commitment to their common pursuits.
- The key purpose of any World Café is to think together and innovate collaboratively in order to open up new visions and possibilities for solutions, rather than guiding people to adapt to 'pre-scribed' existing knowledge.

IV. How does the World Café work best?

Over the years, people have written a great deal about how the World Café works. Certainly there are an infinite number of ways to run a successful Café. However, seven simple design principles have proven their value over the [past years](#).¹ When they are used in combination the likelihood for thinking together in innovative ways through dialogue is enhanced, whether or not a formal World Café methodology is employed.

1. Clarify the context;

Ultimately, World Café is not only a process for sharing world views, but also a tool that creates the context for collective action.

2. Create a hospitable environment;
3. Explore questions that matter;
4. Encourage everyone's contribution;
5. Cross-pollinate and connect diverse perspectives;
6. Listen together for pattern, insights and deeper questions;
7. Harvest and share collective discoveries.

V. What are the roles in a World Café?

Café convenor/sponsor: This is the person or group who wants or needs the conversation to take place, and who generally issues the invitation to participants. The job of the Convenor is not to 'sell' the Café but rather to invite members into a collaborative process which includes the convenor, the Café host(s) and the members.

Café host: This person or group helps to manage the World Café process. The host is not a facilitator in the traditional sense, nor an expert consultant. Rather, the Café host (or hosts) provides just enough structure and orienteering as the Café process unfolds to enable the dialogue to produce what we call conversational coherence without control.

Table host: As the iterative rounds of conversation unfold, this is the person who stays to welcome new arrivals and to host the evolving conversation at their table. The table host is also not a traditional facilitator, but an equal member of the conversation.

Member/participant: Those who travel between tables to cross-pollinate ideas and carry the essence of the conversation from their table into the next rounds of conversation.

Design team: This group includes the overall Café host and is responsible for the overall design and implementation of a Café dialogue. By creatively implementing the Café principles, the design team, with the participants and the Café convenor/sponsor, helps assure the success of the Café dialogue.

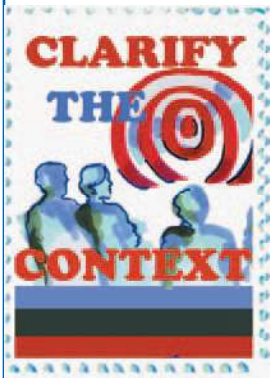
VI. What fundamental principles underpin the World Café?

This article illustrates seven core design principles drawn from our collective experience with the World Café over the last decade.

1. Clarify the context

We are finding that clarifying and setting an appropriate context for a Café conversation requires attention to three key elements that, at first glance, may seem rather simple. However, each of these builds on and relates to the others, creating a whole system that surrounds and informs the conversation.

- Set the Purpose: A clear purpose sets the deeper intention that guides the design and out-



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come of Café conversations. When participants know the purpose and have a stake in its outcome, it focuses the way questions are framed and ideas are explored. Often a group will not yet have framed the questions that can help them reach their purpose. In this situation, the Café itself may be designed to use the knowledge of participants to help shape the conversation, with a cross-section of the potential participants helping to design the gathering.

The design team can begin to ask: “What conversation, if begun today, could ripple out in a way that creates new possibilities for the future of the situation we are exploring?” or, “What question, if explored deeply, could make the most difference to the future of our situation/organization?” These key questions can help shape the focus for the Café. Or, questions such as these can initiate the Café itself, with participants determining their own key questions in an initial round. The core questions that emerge can then be used to focus the ensuing conversation.

In setting the context and purpose during the Café itself it’s important to clarify, both to key members of management and to participants, that the World Café is not designed to create any pre-determined solution. Rather, it convenes people to learn together, create actionable knowledge, and build community. World Café needs the ‘blessing of the powerful,’ who are often the convenors/sponsors of the dialogue. If sponsors or other senior leaders are clear about the deeper purpose of the Café process and the specific focus of their particular Café, key members of the hierarchy will be more likely to support the learning process in positive ways.

- **Determine the right participants:** The diversity of the group matters. Diversity (in terms of interest, hierarchy, gender, age, educational background, etc.) is often key to creating innovative outcomes. It’s helpful to ask: “Who, in addition to those who first come to mind, can help this conversation achieve its purpose? What additional perspectives might contribute valuable insights? Who could receive real benefit by participating with us?” We have found that many sponsors who may initially chafe at the idea of strong diversity, ultimately acknowledge the enriching contribution that diverse views produce.

- **Work creatively with parameters:** In addition to considering venue, resources, and other planning issues, “power” presents one of the most challenging parameters to handle in planning for any learning conversation. For example, in a corporate context, the CEO might normally choose to be in dialogue primarily with his/her Vice Presidents, and they, in turn might generally choose to engage together with their managers. In a Café conversation, the intention is to collectively seek possibilities and to share learning by mixing levels and perspectives, wherever possible. Paradoxically, by not creating the pressure of expecting immediate results, people in Café conversations find themselves more able to share their best thinking around critical questions and to generate innovative possibilities for action. This more open approach actually provokes more active interest from every participant than many traditional problem-solving or action-planning approaches.

2. Create a hospitable environment

Café hosts around the world emphasize the power and importance of creating a welcoming environment—one that feels safe and inviting. Often, one of the first steps is having a person or a group that people respect act as a convener or sponsor of the conversation. This might be



a company, a university, a professional group, or a respected leader or colleague. Ideally, the invitees have the choice of whether to attend, although participation is at times, required. For example, in a corporate context it might be important that an entire department meet together, yet the 'character' of the invitation should be creative and express that the convening is about voluntary sharing and mutual learning.

Part of the preparation might include one-on-one talks with potential participants to explore and refine the purpose and core questions for the Café. Often a diagonal slice of the group who will be at the Café can help design the gathering. The title for the Café also creates its special ambiance. It is useful to find something that resonates with the participants and the purpose (e.g., 'Knowledge Café, Discovery Café, Siemens Creative Café). An energy company from Louisiana called their World Café 'The Pipeline Pub'. A 'personalized' name helps to build shared identity among the participants, and begins to create a welcoming environment.

The ideal World Café environment and physical set up builds on what most people like to experience in a Café: an informal atmosphere, background music, small round tables, red-checked or other table cloths, flowers, natural light, plants etc. Most World Café dialogues include an easel sheet or other white paper on top of the table cloth along with a cup of coloured markers on each table so that attendees can visually express their ideas, as in many neighbourhood Cafés. At the centre of each table it's often fun to place a small flag or another symbol to support shared identity (e.g., a flag reading 'the XYZ Café). At the same the symbol can be used as a [talking stick](#).² The varieties for creating the Café environment are endless.

Paying attention to the culture of the people attending the Café is essential. The atmosphere created for a Café in Munich might look and feel different than a Café held in Singapore; a Café created for high school students might well be very different from one designed for top level business executives. Experiments during Café conversations show that background music during a World Café dialogue can be quite helpful (if it is not too loud). Music usually keeps voice levels down, and participants tend to lean closer and listen more attentively at the table.

World Café sessions have been as small as 12 and as large as 1200 attendees. With groups smaller than 12, a dialogue circle or other small group process is generally more useful. The Café environment works best with four people per table. Five people are also workable but if the group is larger, dialogue breaks down, as some people tend to take over the conversation while others remain silent. In our experience and research, three people do not provide enough diversity of perspective. Four is ideal, because it both allows a certain amount of intimacy; everyone can have his or her share in the conversation; and it works out even if one or two people don't actively participate in talking.

The diameter of the table (the ideal is approximately 36 to 42 inches) is another important factor. Smaller tables facilitate more intimate connection between participants and draw them literally closer to each other. We have found that people are much more willing to be emotionally open and say what they really mean in closer groups. This deepens the quality and depth of the conversation and greatly elevates shared learning.

The convenor/sponsor(s) and Café host should welcome attendees. It is best if the sponsor/convenor and the overall Café host present themselves in partnership, demonstrating that they

share the purpose of the meeting as well as the attitude of inviting and appreciating everybody's contribution. After the welcome, the Café host (in large groups there might be also more than one host) takes over and initiates the Café by first talking with the participants about how the World Café works and sharing Café etiquette.

Over time, a World Café etiquette has developed. It contains a set of simple, basic guidelines for the Café conversations. In summary, they are:

- Focus on what matters;
- Contribute your thinking;
- Speak your mind and heart;
- Listen to understand;
- Link and connect ideas;
- Listen together for insights, patterns, and deeper questions;
- Play, doodle, draw – writing on the table cloth is encouraged;
- Have fun!

However, rather than just presenting the Café etiquette, it is often very effective to ask participants themselves what, for each of them, constitutes a good conversation. We often ask participants to take a couple of minutes to share with a partner at their table:

- Recall a time in a conversation, either at in your professional or your personal life, when you have experienced a significant shift in your thinking or learned something new through the power of conversation?
- What were the qualities that made that particular experience a great conversation?

We then ask people to share those qualities with the larger group for mutual inspiration. Interestingly, people from all over the world, no matter what their culture or background, mention similar characteristics. Sharing these enables people to develop their own self-developed conversational “etiquette”—creating and agreeing on the conversational principles themselves. The World Café etiquette is then simply a re-affirmation and extension of what they already know from their own experience.

The conversational principles developed by the participants should be reflected graphically on a [wall mural](#)³ or easel pad. The host can then connect them to the etiquette of the World Café. This process of initial sharing and whole group feedback on the qualities of “great conversations” can take as little as ten minutes. Once there is clarity about procedures and etiquette, the host starts the table conversations by offering a first question.

To be concluded next week.

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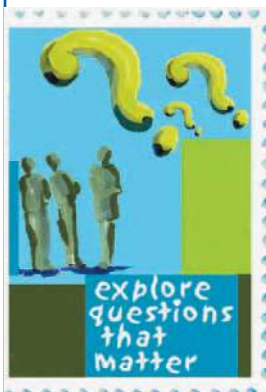
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3. Explore questions that matter



The World Café is intended to open new possibilities for inquiry and action around questions that matter to people. Paying particular attention to the phrasing of these questions focused on the shared topic is key. Extensive research has shown that the manner in which the question is constructed strongly influences the [answer](#).⁴ Among the helpful hints to [follow](#)⁵ is to focus Café questions on seeking possibilities rather than fixing problems. Powerful questions are open-ended, simple and clear, thought-provoking, and not focused on discovering an immediate answer. They generate energy, focus inquiry, and bring assumptions to the surface.

Evoking new insights is an important purpose of any World Café conversation. For example, a 'could be' question is much more likely to elicit creative thinking than a 'should-be' question. Appreciative questions like, 'What new possibilities does this challenging situation offer us?' are also very useful to engage people in dialogue. Questions like 'Why did it go wrong?' or 'How can we fix this?' imply that something is neither good nor done well. They tend to make people defensive, self-justifying, and backward looking, and rather than proactive, creative and forward looking.

The host can help participants to move from 'How should we....' thinking towards 'What if we'... thinking, as they begin to imagine creative possibilities, or frame more powerful questions in relation to the topic. The imaginative 'what if'...character of this type of thinking demonstrates the openness to further learning, research and exploration. This type of thinking is critical to effective action, particularly when dealing with complex issues, like the strategic dilemmas most organizations face in today's world.

Once a number of core questions or critical strategic issues have been gathered during the Café process, the host can move toward action by asking the participants which of them would like to host a conversation around any of the questions or action possibilities developed. "Who would like to champion the question or action opportunity and to take it further?"



4. Encourage everyone's contribution

Once participants receive the first question, each table starts its own dialogue. Only one person talks at a time. The others try to focus on real listening, which means: suspending judgement, holding back immediate reactions, and fully concentrating on what the person talking is saying.

Using a talking stick or other small object helps encourage everyone's contribution. When one person has finished, any other person can continue by taking the talking piece and sharing his or her view about the question. Simultaneously, other participants can start drawing and writing on the tablecloth what he or she hears. This ensures that no key comment is "lost." The table notes also serves to connect comments and ideas.

The purpose of using a talking piece is to create space for whatever wants to be said, or not to be said. Hence, its object is to allow and appreciate silence so that

those who do not want to speak can choose to say nothing by passing the talking piece. The silent spaces between the words carry as much importance as the words themselves. Once each member of the table has had an opportunity to contribute, the group opens the conversation to explore the question further. It is important that people do not start to judge other statements but try to reflect constructively on them. This round takes around 20 to 30 minutes, depending on the topic, the size of the total group and time available.

The host can signal the end of the first round of conversation by simply raising his or her hand. As people see the signal, they bring their conversation to a close and also raise their hands (this should be agreed on prior to initiating the Café). Each table selects a table host. Then, everyone except the table host moves (ideally in silence) to different tables, so that each table represents a new constellation of four people. The table host welcomes their travellers and shares the key points of the initial group's conversation. Then every other person has a chance to contribute what he or she has brought from the previous table, thus linking and connecting ideas. As all insights are shared, the conversation moves to deeper levels.

After about another 20 minutes (if time permits) a new change of tables is recommended, for a third round of conversation. People may return to their "home table" to synthesize the insights from their "travels" or may continue to a new table for a third round of exploration.

5. Connect diverse perspectives

One of the defining features of the World Café approach to dialogue is the intentional cross-pollination of ideas as people move from table to table in several evolving rounds of dialogue. Moving between tables, talking with new people, actively contributing each person's thinking, and linking the essence of collective discoveries to ever-widening circles of thought are hallmarks of the World Café.

In the course of the Café rounds multiple perspectives focused on common questions start to connect themselves to each other, thereby supporting the 'construction' of an invisible inter-relational tapestry of thought woven among participants during the Café. Patterns emerge, additional perspectives surface, and surprising combinations of insight and creativity reveal themselves in ways people had not previously imagined.

At times it is not practical for people to move, but the cross-pollination of ideas is still possible. For example, people at each table can write one key insight, idea, or theme from their table conversation on a large index card. Each member can then turn in a different direction and exchange their card with a person at a nearby table, thus randomly cross-pollinating insights among table conversation. Members read aloud the "gifts" they've received to provide creative input for a deepening round of conversation.

The Illustration Wall, often used to harvest insights at the end of a Café, (see Principle #7) features the shared patterns that emerge during the conversations.





Participants who reflect on these visuals after the Café concludes reaffirm their earlier experience of the interrelatedness of the individual contributions and common themes discovered within the collective conversation.

6. Listen together for patterns, insights and deeper questions

At a minimum, a World Café lasts about three to four rounds, depending on the size of the total group, the overall intention, and the focus of the topic. During these rounds participants are encouraged to engage in a special type of listening. It moves beyond listening to other people speaking by simultaneously inviting members to listen with each other for connections and patterns of meaning as well as listening for new insights or deeper questions that emerge in the space between different perspectives. This is what we mean by "listening into the middle."

As each round evolves, participants are encouraged to listen together to what's emerging in their midst—for the cluster of related meanings that emerges both within and between conversations—thus focusing the attention of the group in a different way than happens in many of our day-to-day conversations.

Something quite unexpected often happens in World Café conversations when participants are asked to become ambassadors of meaning—listening together and carrying forward the essential ideas of ah-ha insights into progressive rounds of conversation. Rigid positions seem to drop away as people listen together in order to discover creative connections among the multiple perspectives that others contribute. After several rounds, people become more interested in the evolution of collective thought than in their own personal "position."

In the final round participants may return to their initial table to synthesize their discoveries. For this last round the Café host then might ask: What were the key topics and insights that arose? What patterns emerged during your rounds of conversations? What was the single most important, relevant issue you heard? or "In this Café, what key question stands out that, if we were able to explore it, would provide breakthrough results for our situation."

7. Harvest and share collective discoveries

After completing their several rounds of conversation, the entire group engages in a conversation of the whole to harvest and share collective insights. We call these 'town meeting-style conversations'. These are not formal "report-outs" Rather, they provide time for mutual reflection, offering the entire group an opportunity to notice the deeper discoveries, themes, or questions that have presented themselves through the medium of the Café.

The Café host often gives participants a few minutes of silence to note down what, for them, was a key insight from the multiple conversations they've been part of. Then anyone in the room can begin, with others noticing what discoveries from their own conversations link to this initial sharing. As new threads are woven, a tapestry of thought begins to reveal itself. Connections to the larger

whole are discovered, collective knowledge grows, and new action possibilities emerge. Café conversations often lead to surprising outcomes that no one could have predicted when the [conversation began](#).⁶ If the Café community is very large, it is important to have a couple of microphones in the room so that all contributions can be heard. It might also be necessary to have a large screen, so that all participants can see the graphics or the Illustration Wall, as insights are shared. Or, if no graphic illustrator is available, other creative ways of making the collective knowledge visible as part of harvesting and sharing discoveries at the end of a Café are:

- Gallery Tours (prior to the "conversation of the whole" people place the paper from their tables on the wall so that all members can take a 'tour', noting down what they intuitively sense as central to the conversation as a whole);
- Posting insights (each participant posts one key insight on a wall where all insights are collected);
- Creating idea clusters (grouping individual insights and ideas together in 'affinity clusters' that can be used for action planning in the next stages of working with the material.).

Café organizers can also summarize and make available the key outcomes of the Café to all participants. Some Cafés create a newspaper or storybook to share the results of their work with larger audiences. Any storybook can be written in the 'We'-style to reflect the collaborative nature of the conversation. Presumably the visual recorder or other members will have captured key insights on flip charts or wall murals. These can be photographed and included in the Café summary as well.



V. From dialogue to action

Thousands of people on five continents have experienced the World Café in settings ranging from crowded hotel ballrooms with 1,200 people, to living rooms with just a dozen participants. The Café supports conversations that matter in every context, be it in business, government, health, education, or community-based organizations.

In New Zealand, Western and Eastern Europe, Africa, Singapore, Latin America and North America, Café conversations have been held on key issues related to business futures, sustainable development, health improvement, educational issues, government affairs, and community collaboration. Café principles have supported Conversation Cafés and Commonway Cafés, two key citizen initiatives that invite diverse groups to explore contemporary issues. Another powerful example of the World Café in action is the initiative of Academy Fellow Margaret Wheatley, ['From the Four Directions: People Everywhere Leading the Way'](#). The effort is intentionally weaving a global network of conversations among leaders of all ages on several continents. Using the internet and other information technologies, local conversation circles feed insights back into the network, catalyzing these world-wide leadership dialogues into a growing force for societal innovation."⁷

A crucial success factor for organizations is to continue to engage their members in meaningful conversations, thus contributing to an organizational "culture of dialogue."

One core question frequently arises: "How can the positive experience of collective creativity and shared learning advance into action?"

Findings from the Café can be used to develop action in different kind of situations, e.g., small task groups can specifically evaluate the various concepts and ideas for later implementation. Or, after the completion of the Café dialogue phase, the group can move into an action planning mode, prioritizing key ideas generated in the earlier Café dialogues, and determining appropriate implementation infrastructure and next steps. The World Café approach has been used to develop business and organizational strategy, to create new product ideas, to harvest collective expertise to serve clients' needs, to enhance safety performance, to support executive education, to foster community development, and for a host of other specific applications.

A crucial success factor for organizations that use the Café is that they continue to engage their members in meaningful conversations, thus contributing to an organizational "culture of dialogue." The continuous use of the World Café methodology ensures that knowledge sharing and joint learning become a more natural habit for the organization. Indeed, the World Café can have a great impact on individual behaviour and on organizational culture. It has the potential to positively transform an organization in the process of discovering its collective knowledge and creativity.

VI. Conclusion

The World Café process provides a real opportunity for any organization or group of people to build community, to share learning and to develop new ways of thinking and acting collaboratively. The World Café process has demonstrated a remarkable capacity to foster authentic conversation and knowledge sharing among people of varied backgrounds – even if they have never met or had formal dialogue training.

When it is well designed and hosted, The World Café works effectively in diverse situations and cultures because participants resonate with the same design principles for creating conversations that matter.

The preparation of the World Café, especially the design, is the most important phase. If enough attention has been paid to this phase, often supported by members from different levels within the organization or the group who take ownership for the Café process, a strong base is laid for a successful Café.

As a dialogue process, the World Café has no real limits of scale with meetings being organized for 1200 people or more. The dialogue process is present at each table, and every table represents a fractal of the entire group. We are intrigued by how differently human beings think. Yet, in spite of the immense diversity of individual perspectives, when we create the context for deep, meaningful conversations, a common or collective consciousness seems to emerge, from which unique and innovative solutions reveal themselves.

The World Café also challenges a traditional view that talking is not consistent with doing "real work." We regard collaborative conversation as a core process–

– an essential part of the the work of any group or organization. Given the exceptional results that come out of World Café dialogues, it is surprising that within organizations not enough attention, time, nor space are given to hosting quality conversations. Time for reflective conversations is rare. However, its impact is very strong, especially in terms of quality of relationship, shared identity and shared vision, trust and community building, learning and knowledge, creativity and innovation, flexibility, and adaptability.

All these elements are crucial ingredients for the building of effective and successful organizations and communities. In the ever-changing environments which require innovation and constant adaptation, World Cafés provide a clear pathway to resilience, innovation, and sustainable success. And that's what really matters to most organizations.

NEW WAYS TO DESIGN MEETINGS

Any corporation has numerous events in which the World Café could play a role. It has immediate practical implications for meeting and conference design, strategy formation, organizational development, knowledge creation, and large-scale systems change. Here are a few specific examples for meeting types where World Café can be applied:

- **Internal meetings** (board meeting, department meeting, and employee gathering): Potential questions: What are the key strategic challenges and opportunities our organization is facing? How could the ideal communication in this organization be achieved? How could we jointly foster the level of innovation of our organization? How do employees' individual visions fit into the organizational vision?
- **Assessment Centers / Recruiting new employees:** Potential new employees could explore: How would we want our ideal employer's organization to be?
- **International representative meeting:** How could the cooperation between the organization and its international representatives ideally occur?
- **Post Merger Integration:** What kind of joint culture of our two newly merged organizations do we want to create together?
- **Client meetings:** What would we like to hear a most satisfied client say about our organization, our product and our services?
- **Multi-Stakeholder-Meeting:** How can all stakeholders best support each other? How can we all be of best service for the ultimate client of the organization's product?

A BUSINESS CASE

A large pharmaceutical company wanted to find new ways to provide service to its customers. Therefore the organization aimed to expand its relationships

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with all its stakeholders by involving them in this goal. Earlier, the company had learned that they were engaged only in internal conversations but not with external groups. In a first internal Café the company identified all its respective stakeholders (e.g., dealers, pharmacies, doctors, nurses, patients, patients' associations, etc.). Then, they invited representatives of the various stakeholder groups to engage with them in conversation. The purpose was to jointly develop a set of relationships in which all stakeholders could best be of service to the patient as the ultimate consumer of the company's products and services.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE CASE

32 people came together in 2002 to discuss environmental issues and convened a World Café. The group included people from Greenpeace, politicians, and executives from businesses like transportation companies, etc. Usually, these people did not talk to each other. They had received an invitation that asked them to participate in a round table conference.

They were surprised when they arrived as they did not expect small round tables but one big one. The small round tables, in conjunction with the new Café dialogue-based conversation approach, literally moved them out of their normal reference model for conversations. New relationships developed and creative ideas emerged from the diversity of thought present in the group that members could take back to their own constituencies.

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Useful websites:

- www.theworldcafe.com
- www.fromthefourdirections.com
- www.fromthefourdirections.org/

Artwork credits: Nancy Margulies and the SystemsThinking Conference shots to Betty Alexander, Gretchen Pisano, and Michelle Boos-Stone.

Footnotes:

1. Brown, Juanita, *The World Café, A Resource Guide for Hosting Conversations that Matter*, 2002.
2. Talking stick: reference to an old native American tradition where a talking stick was held by the current speaker and, after the speech, placed back in the conversation circle or handed over to the next speaker.
3. It has proven to be a worthy investment to engage a professional visual recorder who can collect all contributions at a wall mural in form of words, phrases, symbols, graphics, and even little sketches. At the end of the World Café sessions a large, colorful, perhaps even humorous illustration captures the essence and the most important outcome of the session.
4. E.g., compare: Cooperrider, D., Sorensen, P., Whitney, D., Yaeger, T. (Eds.), *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward A Positive Theory Of Change*, 1999.
5. Vogt, Eric E., Brown, Juanita, Isaacs, David: *The Art Of Powerful Questions: Catalyzing Insight, Innovation And Action*, 2003.
6. Brown, Juanita, *supra*, page 17.
7. Brown, Juanita, *supra*, page 5.

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