



Stop, Start, Continue & Mad, Glad, and Sad

There are two powerful and effective tools I share with all my clients to help them facilitate one-on-one and team meetings- **Stop, Start, Continue** and **Mad, Glad, and Sad**.

These tools are incredibly valuable in the following situations:

- Team-building with staff or management teams
- Soliciting feedback from front-line staff
- Facilitating constructive coaching conversations with an individual
- Discerning the "real issues" of a situation or a relationship

Stop, Start, Continue and **Mad, Glad and Sad** can be utilized in group meetings, one-on-one conversations, or in interactive team exercise for an entire team simultaneously (using flipcharts for data capture).

For example, **Stop, Start, Continue** can be used with a group of employees by giving participants each their own copy of the **Stop, Start, Continue** form. Once everyone has their form, ask them to quietly and without discussion read through the handout and write down their responses to the questions using the form. Once everyone is finished, facilitate a group discussion by asking individual participants to share whatever they are comfortable sharing in discussion with the entire group.

The **Stop, Start, Continue** form can be used with individuals in private one-on-one conversations as a tool to guide your conversation. You can also send the form to the person in advance of your meeting to make your face-to-face time meaningful and efficient.

Finally, the **Stop, Start, Continue** process can be used to bring a group of ten to twelve employees or managers together (traditionally, this is not used with managers and staff in the same group until you've become more acquainted with this process). You will have three flipcharts around the room-- one labeled STOP, one labeled START, and one labeled CONTINUE. Participants will each have their own marker or their own stack of post-its and are instructed to share their ideas for each category by either physically writing or placing their post-it on the appropriate flipchart.

There are advantages and disadvantages to each of these data collection methods for **Stop, Start, Continue** (or **Mad, Glad and Sad**).

METHOD ONE Ask participants to use markers and write their ideas under each category (STOP, START, CONTINUE).

Advantages

- Participants can move around the room at their own will
- Participants can write down their own thoughts without having to share with the larger group
- Data collection tends to be extremely fast since people disburse throughout the room—this is especially true for larger groups when you post multiple blank flipchart pages on the walls for each category
- Flipchart pages can be easily referenced for data after the meeting

Disadvantage

Participants tend to watch people as they write their comments down on the flipchart pages which can prove challenging or anxiety-provoking for some participants. It also heightens the possibility of group think occurring—participants changing their responses after seeing what others have written. Additionally, participants might also become biased by the presence of one or two comments and become inclined to simply follow along with those few statements instead of contributing what they may truly be feeling or needing to express.

METHOD TWO Ask participants to use post-it notes—one post-it per idea— and then place each of their post-it notes under the appropriate category (STOP, START, CONTINUE).

Advantages

- Participants perceive greater privacy, because while they fillout each post-it note in the room with the group, they have the privacy of their own pad.
- Participants get out of their seats to place their post-it notes, but again, most participants cannot see what is written on other people's post-it notes during this process.
- The use of post-it notes allows you or the facilitator to organize the post-it notes quickly under each category in themes, or to consolidate repetitious comments.
- Repetitious comments can be easily organized by placing post-it notes together in a line for each category, which visually shows the frequency of comments for each theme under each category. Some of my clients put the post-it notes in columns or rows in order to show the frequencies of each issue, resulting in a bar graph of post-it notes or a histogram.

Disadvantages

- Once the post-it notes are put on the flipchart pages, they are difficult to be read by participants once everyone is back in their seats for discussion— the handwriting tends to be small.
- After the meeting, the handling of the flipchart pages is a little more tedious because the post-it notes can tend to fall off or move as the flipchart pages are folded and utilized later.

Once your team's data is collected, you can use a variety of methods to have your team prioritize the various themes or ideas under each category, STOP, START and CONTINUE.

A similar process is used to solicit feedback using Mad, Glad and Sad.

Examples of questions to use in the use of Stop, Start, Continue are:

- What could we stop, start, or continue to do together as a department, to make this a better place to work?
- What could I stop, start, or continue to do as your boss, to become an even better boss?
- What do each of us need to stop, start, or continue doing in order to become more effective team members?
- Thinking of the way in which this team communicates on a regular basis, what do we need to stop, start, or continue doing?

Examples of questions to use in the use of Mad, Glad, and Sad are:

- Thinking of your daily work life here at work, what are you mad about, glad about, and sad about?
- When you think of how our team interacts and supports each other, what are you mad about, glad about, and sad about?
- When you think of how we treat our customers or patients, what are you mad about, glad about, and sad about?

The only "rules" to use when soliciting feedback from participants are as follows:

- If you provide an idea under one category, please offer another idea under one of the other categories—e.g., if you list a Stop, list a Start too; if you list a Mad, list a Glad too.
- Your contribution must be genuine, constructive, and sensitively worded.

Current Concerns

What am I MAD about?

What am I SAD about?

What am I GLAD about?

What are my priorities to address?

Personal Commitments

What should I STOP doing?

What should I START doing?

What should I CONTINUE doing?

What are the BENEFITS to me?