Examples of Formulating Meeting Agendas as Questions

The following agendas are from meetings and workshops that Gil Broza has designed and facilitated for different clients. Each agenda is shown alongside the deliverables and purpose(s) that it was designed to achieve. Each one also included an introductory step (not shown here) to set the stage.

Development-Infrastructure Partnership Workshop

Background: In this organization, the relationship between product development and infrastructure services was strained. Their senior directors arranged for a workshop with all the team leads from both groups to focus on this question: How can we work better together?

Rational purpose: Build a partnership we're all happy about.

Experiential purpose: Understand each other better.

Deliverables:

- Working agreements and expectations, including how to address potential trouble
- First steps

Agenda:

1. We want to work together better. What's the ideal?
2. Where are we now?
3. What are we already doing that works?
4. How will we move toward the ideal?
5. Where do we foresee potential trouble, and how will we address it?
6. Where will we start?

Product Roadmapping Workshop

Background: In this workshop, 14 people from across the company – anging from team leads to the CEO – met to create the product roadmap for the following nine months. All inputs were to count at face value despite the differences in authority. This meeting was a milestone in the evolution of the company's Agile ways of working, as roadmapping had been the responsibility of only a couple of people.

Rational purposes:

- Achieve shared, clear understanding of the company's strategy and how its objectives will be met.
- Populate and sequence an effective product roadmap for the next nine months.
- Learn effective Agile roadmapping by doing it.

Experiential purpose: Have an experience of fruitful collaboration among a diverse group of participants.

Deliverable: A prioritized, high-level, cross-team product roadmap that goes to May 31

Agenda:

1. What are our corporate objectives and strategy for this fiscal year?
2. Which outcomes (problems/opportunities/needs/goals) do we hope to achieve?
3. What are their priorities?
4. At a high level, how will we address these outcomes? (*headlines suffice for each; organize them by Testable/Usable/Lovable*)
5. How will we use this roadmap and keep it alive?
6. When will we meet again for roadmapping, and how will we go about it?

Whole-company get-together

Background: The company arranged a three-day offsite that required most people to fly in. Its overall theme was to first look back, then to look ahead. Each of the four agenda items shown below took several hours and had its own detailed agenda and process (not shown here). Some were preceded by presentations to level-set knowledge.

Rational purposes: Collaboratively provide input into next year's strategy and process improvements.

Experiential purposes: Everyone feels that making the trip and spending the time are highly worth it for them, their voices are heard, and they can contribute to changes in the company.

Deliverables:

- A list of committed actions and changes to the product and to the way of working, arrived at and agreed to with consensus
- A list of ideas for further exploration, each with a volunteer who will keep them alive after the event
- Insights and learnings about items tentatively planned for next year

Agenda (only for the discussion portion of the offsite; it doesn't mention the various social and team-building activities that were also included):

1. What was it like to work on the version we've just released?
2. Going forward, what about our product and way of working do we want to change or keep?
3. Which of these ideas will we put in place and how, and which will we continue discussing later?
4. The product ideas we have for next year – what will be involved in working on them?