

# Catalyst Circle #5 - Meeting Thoughts

Meeting Video referenced here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1hyNGQ0bRfCo3ezCZumz3hHvheO6DwnUC/view>

First of all, let me start by saying that I am very grateful that these meetings are recorded and available for the Catalyst community to watch. Thank you to the Circle for maintaining transparency and openness. This meeting covered some difficult emotional and challenging ethical grounds, and I wanted to post some of my thoughts. They are broken down into three large buckets:

1. Communication and Expectation Setting
2. Volunteerism vs. Paid Professionals
3. Invoking Special Privileges

## **Communication and Expectation Setting**

It was apparent from the meeting and conversation that the Circle could use more support in capturing action items, reminding people, and following up in-between meetings. There also seemed to be some challenges with expectation setting. Being able to reflect on these and come up with ideas to improve are a great exercise and I am happy to see you all willing to improve things.

One thing that should help (it's still an experiment, so we'll see!) will be the team of facilitators and secretaries that are forming to support the Catalyst Circle. This team of 7 people will be able to act as a team of meeting administrators splitting the duties of facilitation and secretary between two representatives, and the rest of the team assisting in the creation of the next meeting agendas, capturing and disseminating action items, and general meeting hygiene activities and archival recording of notes and recordings.

One area of focus for the Circle can be to set expectations of the roles of each of the Circle members. Is the expectation just to show up at a 2 hour meeting once every two weeks? If not, it would be good to outline the additional expectations and the time that should be required to fulfill these additional requirements. It looks like in your exuberance to make some impact, the Catalyst Circle tried to take on a lot of different initiatives, and perhaps took on more than was healthy for the time available from the members.

## **Volunteerism vs. Paid Professionals**

The topic of volunteerism vs. paid professionals is a really great one. The current circle is comprised of volunteers, and desires to transition into paid professionals. This will better justify the time demands of the roles (see above points) and set up strong expectations of

what success looks like in this role. I think this is a positive direction in which to move to make Catalyst Governance more sustainable over the long term. Volunteerism is a strength in our community, but we also need to be able to set a high bar on these roles and have strong expectations of performance to be successful. Paying people for this performance is more sustainable over the long term as people can stop trying to fit it in between their full-time job and personal life, if they can work for Catalyst part-time or full-time.

### **Invoking Special Privileges**

This was, to me, the most interesting and heartfelt part of the meeting. I found it very reassuring that the ethical and trust issues around invoking special privileges for the Catalyst Circle to get very important proposals into IdeaScale after the deadline were brought up by members of the Circle. When something *feels* wrong, it should be explored, and I think the discussion comparing the critical need to fund the next Catalyst Circle versus evoking special privileges and losing trust or respect of the community was a great exploration of why it felt wrong, and getting to consensus on a path, even if it did not feel completely great at the end. The fact that the discussion happened and that people were able to voice concerns, discuss it, and then share that conversation in all its awkward emotional glory with the community was in itself trust-building, transparent, and open. I wasn't there, so I can't say for sure how I would have handled it, but I respect the conversation and willingness of people to step up and say "wait a second, this feels wrong, we need to talk about it."