

Building a Pro-Dissent Organization  
For Managers

Aim	Action
Be aware that power structures mean dissent is more risky for some staff	Structure Meetings to maximize the number of voices heard. Eg. hold smaller group break-out meetings
	Provide a variety of outlets/mediums for people to be heard
Value diversity and act like it	Give credit for good ideas
	Seek out diverse opinions and diverse perspectives
	Hire for diverse backgrounds
Maintain focus on shared purpose	In all communication, reinforce the purpose of the work
	Make the connection between the employee and the user real and deep through community engagement
	Make purpose-driven decisions and be transparent about them
Relinquish some of your power	Only ask for input if it will actually influence decision-making
	Let yourself be outvoted
Create a culture that values multiple perspectives even if it means more conflict and less efficient decision-making	Be aware of and don't stand for group-think
	Let those who voice a minority opinion know that their input is valuable even if it doesn't change the majority decision
	Set a confident, calming tone when it comes to conflict: disagreement does not mean the sky is falling!



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### All Staff

Awareness/Action	Example
If a decision is being made too quickly, slow it down	<i>“I’m not sure if this is the right direction or not, but I’d really like to have a chance to speak with our users about how it would affect them. Can we revisit this next meeting when we know more?”</i>
If the majority are headed away from purpose, ask reframing questions	<i>“This policy change is great for funding, but we have a goal this year to remove barriers for immigrant community members. Will this actually create a new hurdle for them?”</i>
Notice which colleagues have not yet been heard and bring them in	<i>“James, you know our teen patrons really well, how do you think this will impact them?”</i>
If a colleague has an idea or raise a question that was never answered, return to it	<i>“Janet, you were the one who initially raised this question, do you feel like we’ve adequately addressed it?”</i>
If decisions being made without reference to impacts on related systems, raise questions	<i>“I know this would be good for our balance sheet, but will this put a strain on the homeless shelter?”</i>