

8 Week Good Jobs Strategy Discussion Group

OVERVIEW

This guide was used by Mud Bay as a kick-off in their Good Jobs Transformation with 50-75 employees (store managers and home office staff) over eight weeks.

This is to be used in a reading discussion group of the book "[The Good Jobs Strategy](#)" by Zeynep Ton. This guide can be used at the beginning of a good jobs transformation to build momentum. Instructions can be tailored to the unique requirements of your team.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

- **Prepare.** The questions we're going to answer in our discussion groups are quite specific. Before you read the chapter(s) for each week, review the questions for that week. As you read, make notes on ideas you think are relevant or useful.
- **Call in 1-2 minutes early.** All discussions will take place via teleconference.
- **Start with your name.** You will be introduced by name when you enter the conference call, but please say your name each time before you contribute to the conversation. Since we can't see each other's faces when we're talking on the phone, this will really help.
- **If using a speaker-phone, you may have to speak more loudly.** If you're using handset or headset, it should not be necessary to speak louder than normal.
- **One at a time.** If someone is talking, please wait until they finish before beginning. It is very difficult to hear and understand multiple people talking on a teleconference.
- **Contribute & make space.** If you tend to be quiet, try to stretch yourself a little and speak more often than you usually do. If you tend to dominate discussions, try to make space for people who may be a little slower to jump in.
- **Starred (***) questions.** The answers to questions marked with stars (***) are those being recorded by each group's scribe. This summer, our Strategic Planning team will review all of the answers to the starred questions submitted by all of the groups.
- **Answer Flags.** At the end of the starred question discussions, the scribe will read back to the group the seven answers that they thought were the most popular, original, insightful or valuable. If you think they've missed an important answer, you can ask the scribe to add your answer to the list. (We call this throwing an Answer Flag.) You can throw a total of three Answer Flags during the course of the 8 weeks.
- **Have fun.** Learning new things and figuring stuff out with others should be fun. So keep it light and have fun with the people in your group.

SCHEDULE

Week 1 (ends May 16th)

Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p 36 (Ch 1 & 2)

Questions (60 minutes):

1. (10 min) Introductions. Take turns introducing yourselves to one another. Tell how long you've been part of our company and what you do now. If you're a Costco or Trader Joe's customer, say so.
2. (10 min) What are the most unique or valuable things QuikTrip offers its customers?
3. *****(15 min)** *What are the most unique or valuable things our company offers its customers?*
4. (10 min) Could Home Depot's new CEO have given Home Depot stronger systems without disempowering staff and hurting customers' experiences?
5. *****(15 min)** *How could our company improve customer or staff happiness by giving staff greater ability to use their own judgment?*

Week 2 (ends May 23rd)

Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p 73 (Ch 3 & 4)

Questions (60 minutes):

1. (10 min) What are the most valuable investments Mercadona makes in its staff?
2. *****(15 min)** *What are the most valuable investments that our company could make in its staff that we're not making today?*
3. (5 min) What's the average for staff turnover in US retail? What's the turnover rate for Mercadona?
4. (10 min) With its low staff turnover and high staff engagement, what can Mercadona do better than other grocers?
5. (5 min) What's our current staff turnover right now?
6. *****(15 min)** *What could our company do differently if it had staff turnover as low and staff engagement as high as Mercadona?*

Week 3 (ends May 30)

Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p 98 (Ch 5)

Questions (45 minutes):

1. (8 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week's reading?
2. (8 min) What are the most surprising ways that Costco chooses to offer its customers less?
3. (8 min) Costco, Trader Joes and Mercadona offer their customers *less* than their competitors, but their customers love them *more* than their competitors. How is this possible? Why does it work?
4. (8 min) What are all of the ways our company might (*might*, not *should*) offer its customers less?
5. *****(15 min)** *How could we become a stronger company over the long run by choosing to offer less than we do today?*

Week 4 (ends June 6)
Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p.128 (Ch 6)
Questions (45 minutes):

1. (8 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week's reading?
2. (10 min) How does standardization make QuikTrip a stronger company?
3. (10 min) How did QuikTrip implement standardization without disempowering staff?
4. (10 min) What aspects of our company's operations should never be standardized?
5. ****(15 min) What aspects of our company aren't standardized now (or haven't been standardized very well), but perhaps should be in the future?*

Week 5 (ends June 13)
Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p.152 (Ch 7)
Questions (45 minutes):

1. (8 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week's reading?
2. (8 min) What are all of the different techniques retailers can use to respond to the variability of customer traffic?
3. (8 min) Which of these techniques do Good Jobs retailers choose to use? (Why?)
4. (8 min) Which of these techniques do Good Jobs retailers choose not to use? (Why not?)
5. ****(15 min) How could we improve efficiency or customer experience or staff satisfaction (or all three) by changing how our company adapts to the variability of customer traffic?*

Week 6 (ends June 20)
Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p.172 (Ch 8)
Questions (45 minutes):

1. (8 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week's reading?
2. (8 min) Operating with slack (staffing a little heavy instead of lean) works well for the four model retailers, but would it work well for lots of other retailers? Why or why not?
3. (8 min) Do our stores today operate lean or with slack? Does it vary by store?
4. **** (15 min) If our stores that operate lean today were to start operating with more slack, what productive activities could staff engage in when customer traffic was slow?*
5. **** (10 min) Zeynep Ton writes, "Model retailers cut waste everywhere they can find it except when it comes to labor." (p154) What are our biggest opportunities to cut waste or improve efficiency?*

Week 7 (ends June 27)

Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p.190 (Ch 9)

Questions (45 minutes):

1. (8 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week’s reading?
2. ***(15 min) What do our customers believe about our prices? Make your best guess about roughly what percentage of our company’s customers fall into each of these camps. (Your percentages should add up to 100%):

a.	Our company’s prices are very high:	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
b.	Our company’s prices are high:	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
c.	Our company’s prices are average:	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
d.	Our company’s prices are low:	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
e.	Our company’s prices are very low:	0%	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%

3. (8 min) All four of the Good Jobs retailers are known for their low prices. Why are low prices an essential part of the Good Jobs strategy?
4. ***(15 min) If we are going to succeed at the Good Jobs strategy, do any of our prices need to be lower than they are today? Which ones?

Week 8 (ends July 4)

Read *Good Jobs Strategy* through p.207 (Ch 10)

Questions (45 minutes):

1. (5 min) What was the most surprising or relevant or important thing you found in this week’s reading?
2. ***(15 min) Which values (written or unwritten) or other aspects of our culture are most critical to keeping our company on the road to becoming a great company and a great place to work?
3. (5 min) Based on what you’ve read and what you know from personal experience, what are the one, two or three characteristics of Costco that Costco shoppers love most?
4. (5 min) What are the one, two or three characteristics of Trader Joe’s that Trader Joe’s shoppers love most?
5. ***(15 min) Imagine you could wave a magic wand and make our company the best possible version of itself. Close your eyes and wave the wand. Picturing your ideal version of *our company*, ask yourself: What are the one, two or three characteristics that make shoppers love *us* more than our competitors?