

# better all-hands meetings

25 Tips to Engage Your Team

**slido**

**Here's to  
all-hands meetings  
that matter!**

# Intro

Whether your company is made up of 10 or 10,000 people, running a regular all-hands meeting is a great opportunity to give your employees a voice.

The most meaningful all-hands meetings help drive your company culture by focusing on your greatest asset: your people.

Like everything, these meetings need to evolve. What will they look like in the future? We believe they'll be interactive, collaborative, inclusive and transparent. Most of all, they will be the meetings your employees will look forward to!

This book collects together 25 actionable tips to help you organize all-hands meetings that foster your company culture and build trust within your team. They're all tried and tested, either by us or by leaders in the industry.

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**Audience  
engagement  
in the room**

**Taking the mantra "employees are the company's first customers," an all-hands meeting is a space where people have the chance to express themselves and have direct, face-to-face conversation with their leaders.**

**To be able to do that, an all-hands meeting has to provide them with enough opportunities for engagement and personal interaction.**

**With a handful of simple tips, you can enhance engagement at your company all-hands and turn it into a valuable dialogue that will promote honesty and openness in your team.**

# 01 **Crowdsource and discuss your team's highlights**

Recognizing your team's efforts and achievements by celebrating key milestones together is a great way to boost team spirit and keep everyone up-to-date with what other teams have been working on.

Instead of driving company high points from the top, ask your participants to share their personal highlights in pairs or small groups. As the discussion is coming to a close, ask everyone to submit and upvote them through Slido.

Once you have the submissions, review the top ones on screen and give credit where credit is due.



## 02

# Celebrate your silent heroes

An all-hands offers you a unique chance to celebrate the people who made the highlights possible. Giving a shout-out to silent heroes is a way to acknowledge those working hard behind the scenes while boosting morale in the team.

Ask your colleagues to nominate a person who helped them the most or went the extra mile during the past month using a word cloud poll. The more often the name is submitted, the bigger it will show on the screen. This helps you quickly recognize those who have had the biggest impact on the company this month.

Seeing your name on the screen is a powerful thing. After all, it means you are somebody's hero.

## 03

# Acknowledge personal triumphs

Besides acknowledging professional achievements, it is important to recognize people for their personal ones as well.

Toast to people's birthdays, celebrate people's personal achievements and important life events like weddings, babies, marathons run, or competitions won. Include these along with people's photos on a slide and give them a public shout-out. Any success should not be taken for granted.

Also, don't forget to celebrate work anniversaries. Thanking people for being loyal to your company is motivating and encouraging.

## 04

# Review seasonal numbers in a quiz

A seasonal or yearly wrap-up is a great opportunity to bring the whole team together to review achievements and summarize the year's key numbers. To make it fun, you can turn it into an interactive quiz.

Create a survey with a series of poll questions. In addition to key numbers, you can include fun facts such as the number of air miles traveled by your team, liters of coffee drunk in the office, or private milestones.

Let people submit their guesses in multiple-choice polls before revealing the correct answers.

## 05

# Share your customer success stories

After a tough month, it is always rewarding for people to be reminded of the impact they are making. Collect three or four of the most powerful customer quotes and share them in your slides or tell an impactful customer success story.

Hearing how your product or service positively impacted your customers also strengthens the “why” behind your company and reminds your team what’s behind their work.

## 06

# Don't forget to have fun

Find a way to insert some fun into your all-hands. It is up to you to judge what's suitable for the size, structure, and agenda of your meeting. For example, we opened our Christmas all-hands with our company band playing 'All I want for Christmas'. The whole team joined in with the singing and dancing.

Of course, it doesn't have to be a band. Share the pictures from your offsites, or fun stats such as: 'How many Slack messages did we send to each other last month?' or 'How many minutes did we spend on the Zoom calls?'

**Engaging  
remote teams**

**With teams often distributed across different locations and time zones, all-hands meetings are one-of-a-kind opportunities to engage remote colleagues and help them feel a part of the team.**

**We know how easy it is for online participants to tune out or feel excluded unless they are compelled to pay attention and contribute.**

**However, with the right tools and facilitation techniques, you can actively engage your remote colleagues, make it easier for them to participate, let them be heard and get the most out of each all-hands meeting.**

## 07

# Make sure your AV setup is flawless

Set up and test your sound before the meeting kicks off. At Slido, we use Zoom for all our virtual meetings, including our monthly all-hands. We find it a reliable and easy-to-use tool with great video and sound quality.

Start the meeting a few minutes early to allow remote colleagues to join. Make sure you greet them and check whether they can hear you well as soon as they join.

To make sure the colleagues online can hear everybody in the room properly, use a microphone whenever someone speaks. At Slido, we use Catchbox, a soft throwable mic that also adds a dynamic element to the room.



## 08

# Appoint a moderator for the online audience

At our meetings, we appoint a dedicated facilitator for the online teams. Their job is to engage our remote colleagues when certain activities take place in the room so that they don't feel excluded.

For example, if people in the room are prompted to discuss in pairs, the online moderator would engage the remote participants by asking them questions and encouraging them to share their insights.

## 09

# Include remote presenters

To make all-hands even more engaging for online participants, have someone from the remote team present at the all-hands.

Not only does it give a voice to the regions, but it also helps the people in the audience be more aware of and engaged with the online team.

# 10

## Give a warm welcome and re-engage

If your remote colleagues are joining an all-hands meeting, always start by welcoming them and encouraging them to participate. Address them repeatedly during the session and, when it's time for Q&A, ask them to join the discussion and submit their questions via Slido.

To make your remote colleagues feel like they are sitting in the room, you can follow the advice of Adrian Lowther, an Employee Communications Manager at Marks & Spencer: "We always try to get the presenter to refer to remote colleagues. We'll say: Alright guys, we are going to use Slido now, and that includes you over in the regions as well."

# 11

## Have a remote champion for the Q&A

To help their online colleagues get their voice across, one of our clients, a leading financial group, introduced a dedicated facilitator, whose role is to monitor the questions coming from remote employees.

Their Innovation & Design Thinking Manager said: "Something what we've been doing at town halls is having a representative for the folks not in the room to ask clarifying questions to make sure that they have a voice in the room."

# 12

## Share the meeting recordings

Despite your best efforts, it's not always possible in a global company to have everyone from Sydney to San Francisco attend your meeting.

We always record our meetings and share the link via Slack for those who were unable to join live. The remote teams then get together for a 'movie night' where they watch the recording and discuss together.

**Hosting better  
Q&A sessions**

Regardless of whether your employees attend the all-hands in person or online, they surely have questions. In fact, Q&A is probably the most important part of every all-hands meeting.

As Convene's co-founder Chris Kelly said: "Great questions make great town halls."

Our CEO Peter Komornik elaborated on that line of thought: "All-hands is one of the most important days of the month where everyone has a voice to ask their questions."

Sometimes, though, the sessions are filled with silence or softball questions because the employees don't dare to tackle critical issues.

Luckily, there are a few tricks that will help you better handle the entire Q&A flow, improve the level of transparency in your company, make sure important issues get discussed and leave everyone satisfied.

# 13

## Dedicate 25% of the time to Q&A

For many employees, an all-hands Q&A is their only opportunity to engage with company executives. As it's often the last part of the meeting, avoid the temptation to rush through it. Make sure to give people enough time to ask what's on their mind.

A good rule of thumb is to spend about 25% of the agenda on the Q&A forum. Recalculated, 20-25 minutes should allow for the conversation to develop and address the most burning topics.



# 14

## Start collecting questions in advance

A great Q&A begins before you gather in the room. Collecting questions in advance proves to be in-valuable especially when your team grows in size.

At Slido, we let our team submit and upvote their questions about a week prior to our all-hands meeting. This allows us to learn the most pressing questions and get ready.

If you are using both Slido and Slack, you can make the whole process easier with our Slack integration. Just share the link to your Slido event via Slack and then send a few reminders throughout the week to make sure everyone has a chance to raise their concerns.

# 15

## Consider allowing anonymous questions

Even when you are using tools, sourcing the main concerns is not easy. Employees tend to avoid bringing up sensitive questions even though they consider them important.

If the Q&A tool you are using has such a functionality, consider allowing your employees to submit their questions anonymously.

Anonymity creates a safe space for voicing concerns that might otherwise remain unrevealed. During our all-hands, we experimented with anonymous and non-anonymous modes of the Q&A and we always get more questions when we keep the anonymity on.

# 16

## Review the questions and prepare outputs

Collecting questions in advance has two main advantages. With a list of questions in your hands before the meeting, you can cross-check if you covered all the important topics in the presentation with business updates.

Secondly, you can prepare and rehearse the best way to address the questions that came through. Having some time to prepare can be invaluable especially if some sensitive topics pop up.

## Have a moderator lead the conversation

Having a moderator to facilitate the Q&A is a total gamechanger. It improved our all-hands so much.

If you think about it, the Q&A looks a lot like a live interview. And each interview needs a host. Appoint a person on your team to pose the questions and lead the discussion.

During our Q&As, our all-hands moderator, Juraj Holub, groups similar questions together to give the conversation a more natural flow. He always takes a tablet or smartphone on stage to keep an overview of all the questions that fly in.

# 18

## Rehearse before your Q&A

Rehearsing can make a huge difference. To deliver a really strong Q&A make sure that your moderator is in sync with your CEO and executives. Especially when you've crowdsourced the questions in advance.

Encourage the moderator to review the submitted questions with the CEO before the all-hands starts. Let them discuss the flow and the prepared answers so there are no surprises on stage.

The outcome is priceless. The moderator has control over the entire session, ensures that the strategic questions are discussed and draws the right answers from the CEO.

## Manage expectations

If you plan to review and filter the incoming questions, communicate it clearly to your employees. You'll avoid getting negative feedback and prevent disappointment.

You can say something along these lines: "We'll be using moderation to review all incoming questions. We want to make sure we keep the discussion relevant, avoid taking any duplicates and address the most pressing questions."

## Crowdsource the questions live

At the start of the Q&A session, encourage people once again to send in their outstanding questions and upvote the ones that have already been submitted. To help the team better follow the discussion, display the questions on the screen.

Once the session gets underway, highlight the discussed question in fullscreen to make sure everyone's attention is focused on the subject.

## Acknowledge the tough questions

Managing questions doesn't mean you have to dodge the tough ones. On the contrary, as Hannah Lawrence, Zendesk's Internal Communications Manager, said: "Difficult questions are an opportunity to provide valuable context around decisions we've made as a company."

Tough questions are great indicators of matters that weren't explained clearly enough. As Hannah noted: "By providing answers, we're able to clear up misunderstandings and get insights into sentiments and emotions that may be running beneath the surface of the employee population."



## Take the questions from the floor

Apart from questions submitted to Slido, we always recommend taking questions live from the floor to keep the interaction personal.

At our all-hands, we use Catchbox – a handy throwable microphone – to allow people to quickly raise any spontaneous or follow-up questions. It's a great addition to a tech-powered Q&A and caters to the more communicative members of our team.

## Address any outstanding questions in writing

You may receive far more questions than you can handle during a limited Q&A slot. Don't end the discussion there. Take it a step further.

For instance, this is how Marks & Spencer tackles the surplus of questions: "We had way more questions than we could handle in 20 minutes, but the beauty of Slido is that we could take away those 30 or 40 unanswered ones and come back to them later at our team meetings."

Alternatively, you can share the answers on your internal communications tools. Within 2-3 days after our all-hands at Slido, we collect the answers from our CEO and other leaders and share them with our team via Slack.

## 24

# Start Ask Me Anything with the CEO

It can easily happen that 20-min long Q&A once a month or quarter will not be enough to address all the employee questions. This is even more likely in the time of change or major transition.

If this is the case, you might consider hosting a regular Ask Me Anything sessions like Google or Twitter did in the early days.

Showing people that their questions matter and that the CEO is willing to discuss them openly builds a culture of trust and transparency.

## 25

# Ask for feedback directly during the meeting

By the end of the all-hands, ask your team members to fill out a feedback survey. To boost the response rate, ask your attendees to fill it out before they leave the room or the call.

It's powerful to know what your employees took away from this meeting. It is also a space for suggestions and potential complaints.

Make sure there are not too many questions, sometimes two or three well-targeted questions can tell you more than a dozen.

## **Your feedback survey could look something like this:**

- **Overall, how would you rate this all-hands meeting?** (star rating poll)
  
- **What was your main takeaway from this all-hands?** (open text poll)
  
- **Was there anything missing or anything you would like to discuss on the next all-hands?** (open text poll)

# About Slido

Slido is an easy to use Q&A and polling platform for meetings and events.

It allows meeting and event organizers to crowdsource top questions to drive meaningful conversations, engage participants with live polls and capture valuable event data.

## Key features

### Questions

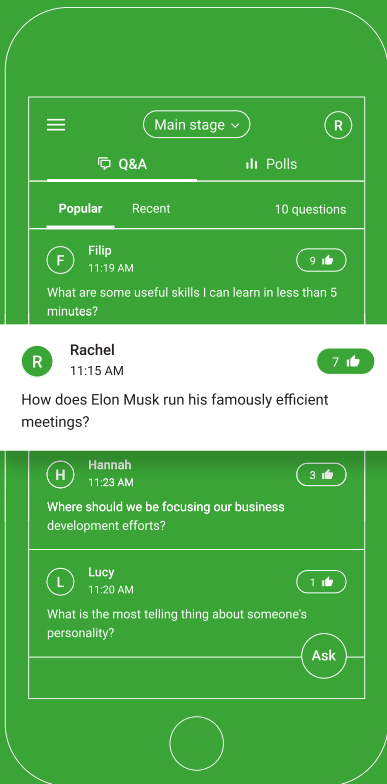
Let your participants ask questions from any device and vote for their favorite ones.

### Live polls

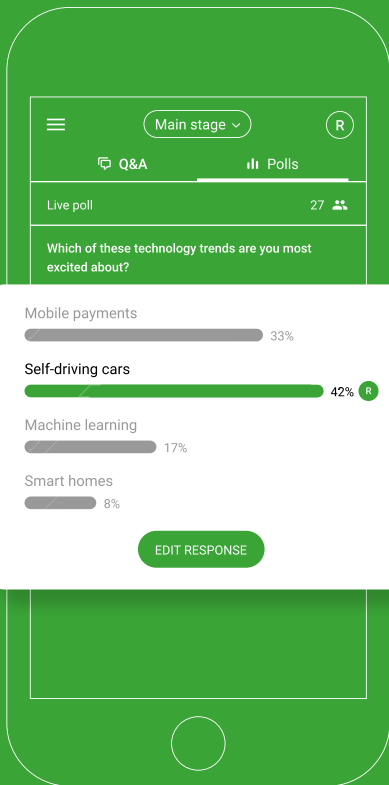
Engage your audience with live polls and display the results in real-time.

### Quizzes BETA

Make learning more fun, dynamic and social with live quizzes.

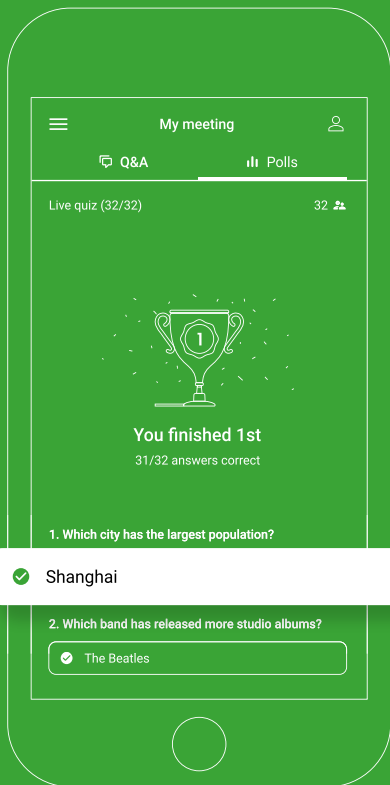


## Questions



Live polls





[support@slido.com](mailto:support@slido.com)  
[www.slido.com](http://www.slido.com)