

Handout #5 - Affinity Grouping

Materials needed: sticky notes or cards, marking pens, large work surface (wall, table, or floor).

1. **Record each of your non-negotiable** with a marking pen **on a separate sticky note or card**. Randomly spread notes on a large work surface so all notes are visible to everyone. The entire team gathers around the notes and participates in the next steps.
2. It is very important that **no one talk during this step. Look for ideas that seem to be related in some way. Place them side by side. Repeat until all notes are grouped**. It's okay to have "loners" that don't seem to fit a group. It's all right to move a note someone else has already moved. If a note seems to belong in two groups, make a second note.
3. **You can talk now**. Participants can discuss the shape of the chart, any surprising patterns, and especially reasons for moving controversial notes. A few more changes may be made. When ideas are grouped, **select a heading for each group. Look for a note in each grouping that captures the meaning of the group. Place it at the top of the group. If there is no such note, write one**. Often it is useful to write or highlight this note in a different color.
4. Combine groups into "supergroups" if appropriate.
5. Compile your list of DRAFT non-negotiables
6. Discuss the DRAFT list as a BLT and come up with your final draft list to distribute to all staff.
7. Distribute to staff, gather feedback, edit and finalize.