

---

## Case Study of a Generative Thinking Meeting at England Rugby

**By Rob Lees, Premium Sales Manager Private Suites & Debentures at England Rugby**

---

### Context

My goal was to run a Generative Thinking Meeting to engage thinking, opinions, and collaborative solutions from everyone in my team - the Premium Sales Team at the Rugby Football Union. The aim was to reduce domination from more senior members of the team, encourage high energy, and encourage contributions from quieter members of my team.

I feel with the coaching techniques I have learnt over the past two months; the GROW model will provide an excellent framework for such a meeting.

I manage a team of five, and every six months we review our sales progress and brainstorm ideas on how we can improve pipeline, leads and product. This meeting involves me reporting sales figures followed by a team discussion, which typically involves one or two senior members of the team, whilst the other two-thirds traditionally sit back - despite having a strong voice and good ideas.

### The Generative Thinking Meeting

As a way to encourage ideas and ensure all six voices are heard, I implemented a generative thinking meeting for our six-month review. I was quite nervous on how it would go - whether the team would be open to change.

Before the meeting, I sat down with my manager and informed him of my plan to run a generative thinking meeting. He was very supportive and asked if I wanted him to sit in. To ensure complete trust, I asked if it could be just our team.

To encourage free speech, I told the team we would be trying something different in our next meeting – specifically part of the coaching programme I have been doing. I offered them the chance to attend or decline and they all chose to attend.

I asked them to join me at the stadium for the meeting, which I think showed the importance of the meeting. We have tried a few meetings on Microsoft Teams, and I much prefer a face to face catch up.

### Contracting

I felt it was important at the start of the meeting to ensure that everyone present knew exactly what to expect. I posed a few questions such as 'What do we want from each other?' and 'What do you want from me?'

Suggestions were written on a flip-chart. I felt this was important so we could refer to these throughout the meeting.

---

## Goal

The goal was simple: 'How do we increase sales?'

## Reality

We all brainstormed 'how' questions such as:

- 'How do we generate more leads?'
- 'How do we reward success?'
- 'How can we improve our products?'
- 'How can we stand out from our competitors?'

Everyone gave a question, and it was pleasing to see the engagement.

One member of the team offered to write up the questions as we went.

We then grouped together the questions and broke off into smaller groups to discuss our goals.

## Options

The team then discussed our options and it was interesting that we all had similar themes. The main theme was 'creating a new product that includes catering', which is not something we currently offer. Another theme was 'flexible pricing' - offering a discount of up to 5% - something we don't currently do but we could easily implement. The final theme was 'rewarding the team better', something that I as a manager would need to consider. Potentially a generative thinking meeting between myself and my manager could work to discuss these options.

## Will

The team then discussed how we could implement these ideas. We decided to submit a deal on paper to our finance board outlining the positive generation of sales that would be created. This would show how we can be more flexible with our pricing. The second option was to hold a complete review of our products including catering and what we can change. We agreed on a three-month time scale. After the session, I thought I could reward the team by organising a team outing as soon as we hit target.

## Feedback

The team all seemed very engaged, and it was arguably our best team meeting. I have been in the role for 12 months now and I've only really spoken with the team virtually. It was refreshing to hear (and see) their ideas.

The feedback from the team was positive, although it did take some time for them to warm up.

Overall, I was pleased with how the generative thinking meeting went and it was great to get all five members of the team contributing ideas. I will certainly run another session like this within two months and continue every other month.