

Traditional Roundtable Presenter Guide

A traditional roundtable is an intimate, facilitated discussion — not a presentation. You bring the topic and the expertise; attendees bring their own perspectives and questions. The goal is a genuine exchange of ideas around the table, not a lecture delivered to one.



SESSION FORMAT AT A GLANCE

2 rounds

27 minutes each, with ~3 minutes between for optional rotation

60 min

total session — attendees may stay or rotate at the break

No AV

conversation-first format; laptops welcome for informal sharing

ATTENDEES STAY OR ROTATE

Attendees choose whether to stay or rotate. At the midpoint, attendees have ~3 minutes to move to a different table if they choose — or stay for round two if the conversation has them hooked. Plan for either scenario: your second round may bring a mostly new group, a mostly familiar one, or some mix of both.

BEFORE THE SESSION

What to prepare and bring

- **Arrive 5–10 minutes early** to find your assigned table (your session title and/or number will be displayed on it) and be ready to begin at the scheduled start time.
- **Prepare a brief framing of your topic** and 2–3 discussion questions in advance.
- **No AV is provided**, but you're welcome to bring your own laptop if you'd like to informally share a visual, image, or short resource with people seated at your table.
- **Upload resources** (optional) in the Whova app after the speaker center opens.

HOW THE SESSION RUNS

- 10 min • **Find Your Table**
Locate your assigned table (marked with your session title/number), get settled, and have your discussion questions ready.
- 0–27 min • **Round One**
Introduce your topic and open discussion. Aim to get the group talking early; the conversation should drive the majority of the time, not your framing.
- ~27–30 min • **Optional Rotation Break**
Attendees may move to a different table or stay put. Either is fine. Welcome whoever is at your table for round two.
- 30–57 min • **Round Two**
Re-introduce your topic briefly for anyone just joined. If your group is mostly the same, let round one's momentum carry you somewhere deeper.
- 57–60 min • **Close & Connect**
Wrap up with a synthesis or final reflection. This is a great moment to share contact information or point people to your optional Whova resources.

TIPS FOR A GREAT ROUNDTABLE

Facilitate more than you present

Provide a brief framing of your topic but aim to open the discussion before the 10-minute mark. Provide enough context to ground the conversation but not so much that it becomes a lecture. Taking questions as you go is a great way to naturally transition into dialogue.

Come with questions, not just answers

The best roundtables feel like a genuine inquiry. Prepare questions you're actually curious about, not just ones you already know the answer to. Curiosity is contagious.

Draw out the quieter voices

Every table has people who are listening carefully but haven't spoken yet. A warm, direct invitation goes a long way: "I'd love to hear your take on this."

Manage your own time

Keep a phone or watch visible to help you keep time. Leave at least 5 minutes at the end of each round for synthesis: "What are we taking away from this?" is a powerful closing move.

Adapt to who's at the table

If round two brings mostly new faces, start fresh. If most people stayed, go deeper, don't repeat round one.

Embrace the intimacy

Roundtables are a great place for networking. Encourage exchange of contact information, LinkedIn, etc.