Future Search Design

Set-up:

Set the room up to have two rows of chairs facing one another. Each chair should have a piece of paper with a question on it. We had five questions.

X (Question 1)   O (Question 2)
X (Question 2)   O (Question 3)
X (Question 3)   O (Question 4)
X (Question 4)   O (Question 5)
X (Question 5)   O (Question 1)

Choose Questions:

Sample questions

1. What are the greatest barriers to our success?
2. What are 2-3 reasons our efforts could fail?
3. What 2-3 pieces of advice can you give that would result in greater success of this project?
4. What are 2-3 effective ways you would suggest to engage and communicate to key stakeholders?

Process:

1. Set a timer for 3 minutes. The X side asks their question and the O side answers. There is not cross talk. It is just a time for each X to listen to the person they are paired with. The person who asks the question takes notes.
2. After three minutes, the O asks their partner their question. The X has 3 minutes to answer.
3. After both sides have asked their question, switch rounds. The O at the front of the room goes around to the back of the room and each O moves down one chair. Xs stay in the same place. Everyone takes the paper with them and keeps their same question.
4. Repeat steps 1 & 2 for the second round.
5. Have people move down one and repeat the same process until each person has had a chance to answer every question, including the question on their own paper (example, at the last round X-Question 1 will be paired with O-Question 1 and they will both ask and answer the same question).

Tabulate Results:

Have everyone who worked on the same question get in a group and classify the answers by Truths, Trends and Unique Ideas.

Truths: Pattern of responses that leap off the page (70% or more of the reports)
Trends: At least 50% say so. The only difference between Trends/Truth is that the trends are quantifiable
Unique Ideas: Different/creative/unique (reported by 1-2 people)

Each small group reports back to the large group.