Bridging the Gap: Building Engagement Across Remote Teams

- *Majesta Ewing, Grants Officer*
- *Karim Hussein, Subcontracts Manager*
- *Nancy Peritz, Operations & Logistics Officer*

Introductions
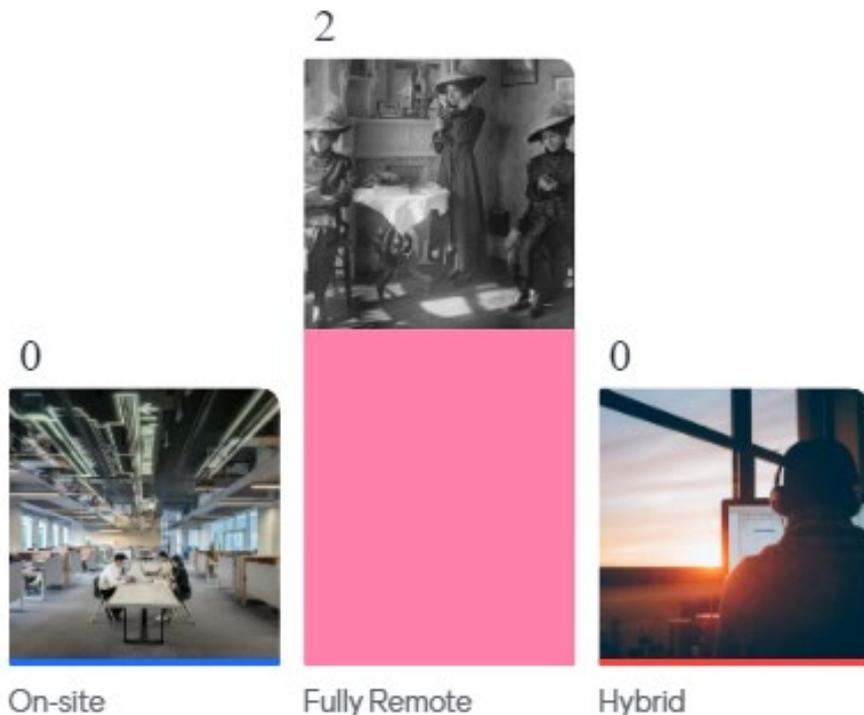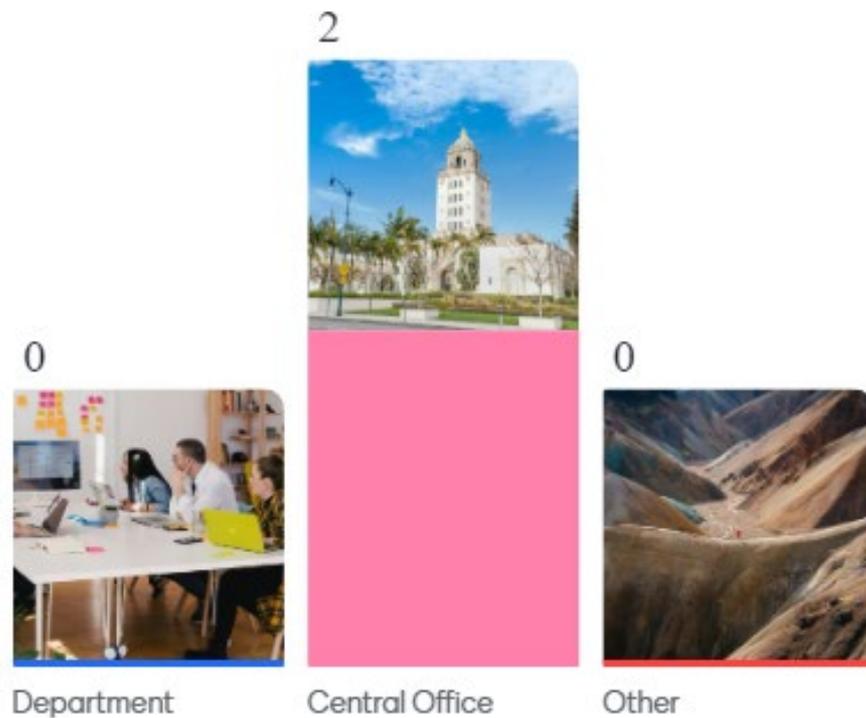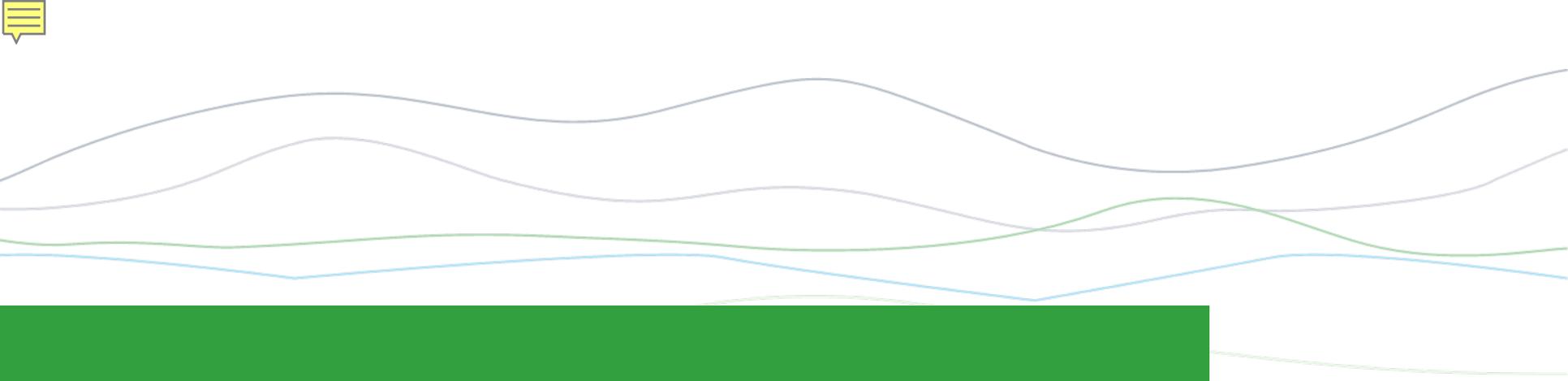
Mentimeter
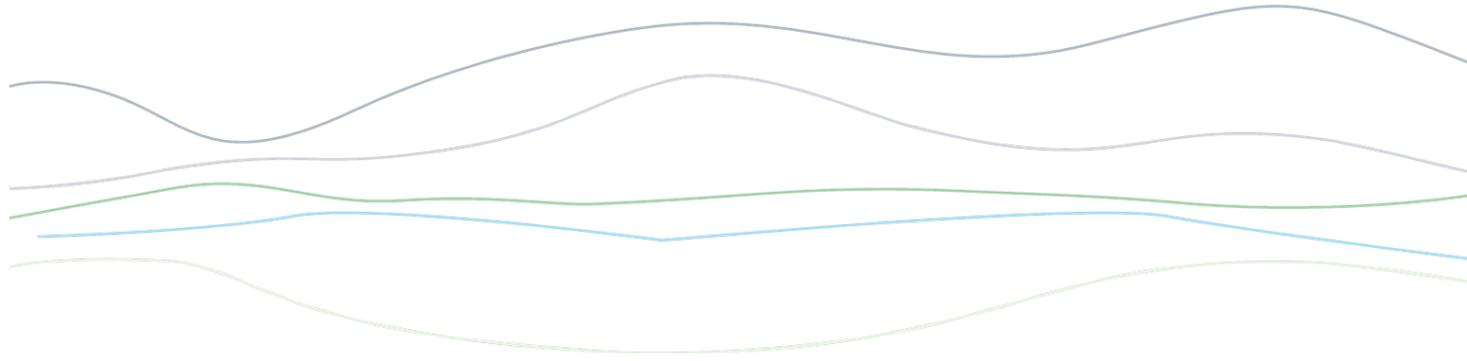
Overview

Overview

- Staff Council: Who, What & Why?
- UCSF Office of Sponsored Research (OSR) Structure
- Brief History of OSR Council
- OSR Council: Who & How?
- OSR Council Projects
- Q & A

Staff Council: Who, What & Why?
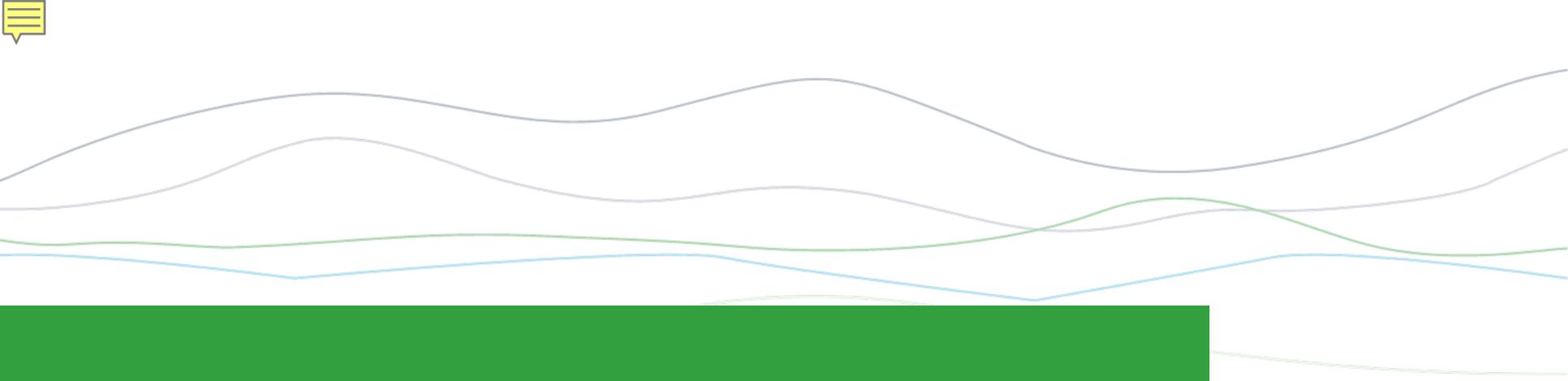
OSR Structure

OSR Structure

Central Office

Office of Sponsored Research Org Chart
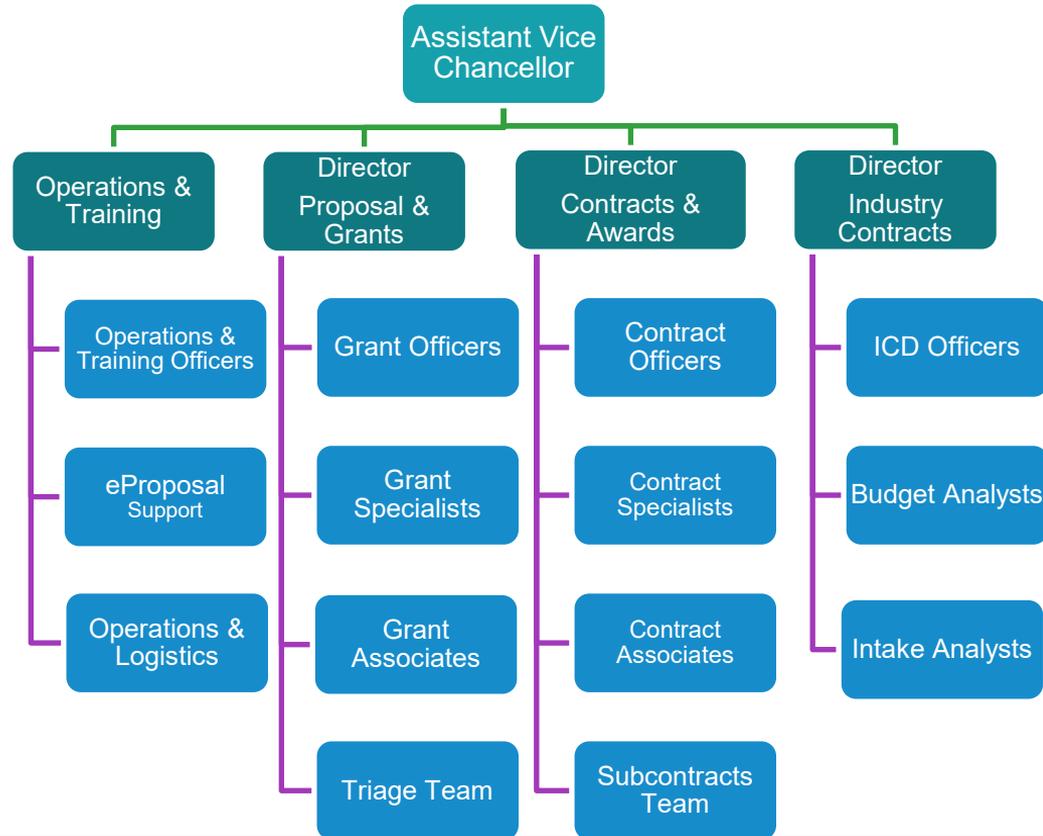
Staff Council: Origin Story

"

The OSR / OCTA Council represents and actively engages OSR and OCTA staff to identify and define issues that impact operations and recommend improvements to leadership. The OSR Council communicates resolutions, actions, and complexities to both staff and leadership.

Members of the OSR Council value input from peers, open and respectful dialogue, and timely and effective problem solving.

Mission Statement

OSR/OCTA Staff Council

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Staff Council Timeline

The Birth and Growth of Staff Council

2013 — At a staff retreat, Staff expressed the need for a voice to Leadership on issues important to them

2014 — Council formed with one rep from each
- Division
- P&G team
- Leadership team
- OCTA

2018
- Formalized roles and structure of the Council
- Established a mission statement

2020 — *Covid-19 global pandemic required re-thinking engagement across virtual teams*

2022
- Council re-launched
- Engagement and Workload Committees formed

2023
- Alternative Work Schedule (AWS) Committee formed
- Whitepaper

2024 — Re-launch of quarterly staff newsletter: *The Inside Scoop* with an Editorial Board

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> *The OSR /OCTA Staff Council initiative was re-launched to meet the demands and challenges of working virtually in a post-pandemic world, aimed at increasing engagement, interconnectedness and communication across teams.*
>
> --2022 OSR/OCTA Staff Council

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Staff Council: How it Works

How Does Council Work?

- **Representatives from All Teams**

- **Members serve as liaisons to their team**
  - Bring issues/questions, provide updates on initiatives

- **Subcommittees Form via Motion from any member**
  - Members volunteer for subcommittees

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Staff Council: Technical Projects

Technical Projects

Brown Bag/Cross-Training Sessions

- ## What are they?

  - Monthly Introductory Sessions to teams across campus

  - Lunch-Time brownbag sessions to learn more about each other

  - In our third year!

- ## What's Working

  - High attendance (60-80% of department)

  - Positive feedback based on surveys

  - Increased engagement, relationship-building and sharing of knowledge/resources

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Technical Projects

Brown Bag/Cross-Training Sessions

- ## What's Not?

  - Repeat sessions are not practical for newer staff

  - Time constraints do not allow for in-depth discussion

  - Delays in launching Phase II of cross-training program

  - Topics may not be relevant to all staff

- ## Takeaways

  - Cross-training doesn't always need to be formal!

  - With remote work, putting faces to names is extremely valuable

  - Research Administration is so multi-faceted, it's important to introduce staff to various stakeholders within the research lifecycle

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Technical Projects

Service Partnership Agreement (SPA)

- ## What is it?
  - Formal agreement between Office of Sponsored Research and Campus
  - Outlines services provided by OSR and standard timelines for transactions
  - Provides roles and responsibilities for department, central office, and PI
  - Covers all types of transactions, proposals, awards, subawards, etc.

- ## What's Working
  - Sets expectations for PIs and departments on service delivery from OSR
  - Sets clear expectations for timelines and deadlines
  - Provides clarity on who does what within OSR

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Technical Projects

Service Partnership Agreement (SPA)

- ## What's Not?

  - Not all departments are aware of the SPA

  - Education, Training & Outreach are still needed in conjunction with the SPA

  - Requires dedicated effort to maintain, leadership buy-in, needs updating more frequently than once every 10 years

- ## Takeaways

  - Overall, it's been helpful to have a document OSR can refer to when questions arise about service delivery

  - Requires significant effort from campus stakeholders to develop and maintain

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Technical Projects

White Paper on Workload

- ## What is It?

  - In 2023, subcommittee formed to evaluate workload, burnout, and request information from OSR leadership

  - Goal was to determine benchmark data for workload distribution, job-creep, and equity between teams within OSR

  - White Paper was delivered to OSR Executive Leadership in 2023

- ## What's Working?

  - OSR Executive Leadership has launched a workload evaluation project to begin to address issues with burnout, equitable workload distribution, and potential understaffing

  - Subcommittee on Alternative Work Arrangement was launched in early 2024

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Technical Projects

White Paper on Workload

- ## What's Not?

    - With a large OSR, this evaluation is a large undertaking and is taking a long time

    - Issues such a complexity, consistency between teams, tracking non-transactional job duties complicate evaluation of workload

    - UCSF doesn't currently have a workload management tool, and the evaluation process will include anecdotal and observational data vs. empirical data

- ## Takeaways

    - The White Paper encouraged Leadership to take a closer look at burnout, equity in workload distribution, and employee morale

    - Evaluating workload in Research Administration is no easy task! Issues such as complexity, non-transactional tasks, difficult PIs may need further analysis

    - Additional flexibility with work schedules may offer one way to reduce staff burnout, but more research is needed

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Staff Council: Engagement Projects

SRAI 2024_Bridging the Gap: Building Engagement Across Remote Teams

Mentimeter

Give examples of systems and tools used at your organization to foster engagement in a virtual workspace.

bold leader

creative

fast focus

inspiration

transpiration

Engagement Committee

How and Why We Started

2021:

- o Engagement Subcommittee formed

Goals:

- o Build Engagement in virtual environment
- o Plan Office-wide Events
  - o Virtual
  - o Regional

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Engagement Committee

Example Initiatives

Teams Channels

Halloween Costume Contest & Virtual Party

Virtual Holiday Party

Virtual Trivia Contest

Earth Day Volunteer Event

Week of Giving

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What's Working?

Office-wide virtual parties

🎃 Halloween costume contest

⛄ Holiday Party w/Scavenger Hunt

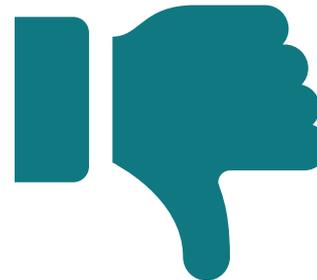## Asynchronous activities

🌍 Earth Day

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Engagement Committee

What's Not Working?

Teams Channels

Low and sporadic participation
Most teams have their own channels
Some teams use other platforms
People chat with a select few people

Trivia and Bingo

Fun, but time-consuming to organize

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Engagement Committee

Takeaways

Start small

Take a survey

Don't get discouraged!

Ask for feedback

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Engagement Committee

Newsletter: *The Inside Scoop*

2024:

- Staff Council approved reviving the staff newsletter

Goals:

- Highlight staff accomplishments
  - Personal
  - Professional
- Share upcoming event and conference info
- Get to know other teams within OSR
- Published quarterly
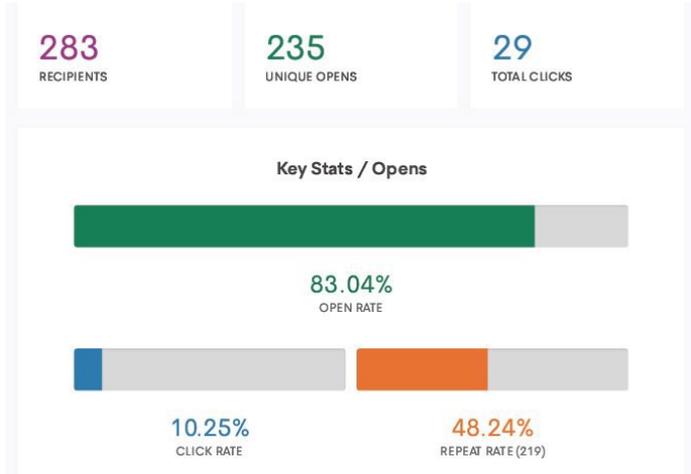
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Engagement Committee

Newsletter: *The Inside Scoop*

- W3: A Word From Winona Ward (AVC)

- Team Spotlight

- Conference Corner

- OSR & OCTA in the News

- Mindful Minute

- Upcoming Events

- Recent Staff Updates (Promotions, Certifications, New Hires, Awards, Service Milestones, etc.)

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OSR Inside Scoop Newsletter

- ## *What's Working?*
  - Huge amount of engagement as seen per our metrics

283 RECIPIENTS

235 UNIQUE OPENS

29 TOTAL CLICKS

Key Stats / Opens

83.04% OPEN RATE

10.25% CLICK RATE

48.24% REPEAT RATE (219)

I do appreciate the time and effort going into Scoop because it does remind us of the humanity behind our laptops taking place. We all work so hard that it's easy to forget there is a whole world of events happening within OSR, connecting us through commonalities and introducing us to what's new with our team members and partnering departments. Thank you!

Christine (Christine.Kinder@ucsf.edu)

Love this issue! It's great to know about the different work that various OSR teams do. The incorporation of all the photos in the staff updates section is fun.

Anonymous

It is so nice to see what the other teams and business units are up to. I love the combination of personal and professional accomplishments. Sometimes it feels like we are operating in a vacuum, so this is a good reminder that we are all connected and working together.

Anonymous

Open Rate July 2024

Feedback July 2024

OSR Inside Scoop Newsletter

- ***What's Not?***

  - Can be time consuming / difficult to manage everyone's schedules. We do mainly offline working with 1-2 meetings a quarter to discuss the plan for the next issue.

  - Some people were angry for the first issue that colleagues were spending their time on this.

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OSR Inside Scoop Newsletter

- Takeaways
  - Cater a newsletter to topics your office finds important
  - Have as many section as you can manage with the volunteers you have
  - Don't rush it

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Thank you!

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