# December 2013 BFR Newsletter

It’s been another wonderful year of BFR workshops and participation in this dynamic, welcoming community. We successfully launched a membership model, and we now have 350 members! and another 500 on our email list. We are fortunate to have so many talented and collegial members. We have developed a reputation for generosity in sharing of our knowledge and combined wisdom, on the listserve and in person. So we can all pat ourselves on the shoulder ☺

1. We learned a lot about **virtual collaboration** in last week’s workshop - many thanks to MJ Kaplan and Vivien Maidaborn for a very helpful workshop. Great review of virtual tools for surveys, shared editing of documents, asynchronous discussion and collection of opinions such as Loomio, tools for synchronous conversations (Webex, GoTo Meeting, Adobe). We’re all eager to continue using Loomio!
2. **BFR Board:** Please join me in thanking the board for their vigorous support of the BFR – especially for helping us create a new and successful membership model this year! **Thank you** to board members: Peter McLoughlin, Fredia Woolf, Perry Carrison, Martha Cook, and Janet Britcher, who stepped off the board this year after 7 years. We’re excited to welcome Martha Cook as a new board member.
3. **BFR Monthly Calendar:** Thank you so much to Sharon Kalus for her excellent and careful compiling of the monthly calendar!!
4. **Next year’s programs**

Here’s what’s on tap so far (subject to change):

* Feb. 7 – Using Surveys to Support OD Projects, Mick Verran,
* April 4 - Polarity management, Beena Sharma
* May 2 - Organizational systems based on ORSC, Beth Shapiro
* June 6 – Metaphor Mapping, Larry Raymond
* Oct. 3 - Consultation with Non-Profit Directors (and all of us)

1. **Meeting venue**

Although we have secured a meeting place for 2014, we’re continuing to explore options. Do you know of any company that would like to have the BFR meet in their space, which would be a great benefit to some of their employees? We need a room that will fit 50 people comfortably, for 8 meetings/year – hopefully with a built-in projector, easels and/or whiteboards, good acoustics. We’ve looked at lots of public spaces (Space with a Soul, YWCA, Boston Common Hotel, etc.) but there may be some untapped resources. Please let us know if anything comes to mind.

1. **Recap of 2013:** We’ve just completed a year of very successful, fun programs, chock-full of tools and learnings for our work. We’ve raised/kept the bar incredibly high! which is the feedback we’ve gotten from participants. These were this year’s programs:

## **In-person monthly workshops** – This was a year of excellent workshops, nearly all of which sold out.

* Feb. Discover your way to Greatness; Steve Spear, author of “the High Velocity Edge: How Market Leaders Leverage Operational Excellence to Beat the Competition”
* March: Difficult to Discuss Issues in OD consulting, Mike Halperin
* April: Merging Cultures part 2, Anne Litwin
* May: Mt. Everest Simulation, Deb Soule and Michael Roberto
* June: When Conflict Happens to Good Work, Eben Weizman and Amy Gay
* Sept: Team Coaching, Alexander Caillet
* Oct: Consultation with Non-Profits – directors and BFR members
* Nov: Practiced Spontaneity: Improv’s Gifts to Facilitation, Izzy Gessell
* Dec 6: Online Collaboration with Loomio, MJ Kaplan and Vivien Maidaborn

**Additional workshops:** We had great fun experimenting with new topics and formats:

* July and Nov: TED Talks, Michael Madera
* Feb. and April: Storytelling Lab, Trisha Griffin Carty
* One-day workshop: Standing in the Fire, Larry Dressler (from Colorado)

\*\* Let us know if you have an idea for a fun, interesting workshop for a group of 25 people.

**Peer learning groups:**

Identify Your Unique Value;

Advanced Facilitation

\*\* These were cohorts of 5-6 people who met over 4-5 months, after they defined what their desired outcomes, relative to the topic.

**Virtual events:**

* Standing in the Fire, Larry Dressler, Jan.
* Clear Leadership, Gervase Bushe, Jan.

**\*\*** This was another experiment with a new medium/format in the virtual space, using Adobe Connect. Great platform – people loved the design of the workshop. We’d love to do more of these, if we can identify topics and/or authors. Any ideas?