PURPOSE PRACTICE #2
Discovering collective purpose

The vast majority of people want their work to matter, and that deep desire is a reliable path to discovery.

Years ago, Richard Rianoshek, co-founder of Conversant and the co-author of our last book, *The Communication Catalyst*, came up with a simple method for identifying collective purpose. We call this tool a Conversation Prep Chart, and the people of Conversant have helped thousands of our clients use the chart to discover mutual purpose.

Here is how to use the chart:

1. Write a brief situation statement. What is already known about the challenge? Is there any information regarding an already-known purpose, methods, and/or measurable goals?

2. Who, including you, are the five people most essential to your challenge? Look for a few important influencers who understand the interests of many people.

3. For each person, starting with you, write down known purposes (for), worries (against) and circumstances (facts). You may remember those terms from the empathy work.

   a. For the others, if you know what they would say, use their words to fill out the chart.

   b. If you don't know, who does?

   c. If you don't know someone who knows, imagine you had that person's job. If you did, what would you say?

   d. If all you can see is what someone is against, then ask these questions:

      For him or her, what is important?

      What can he or she be for that, if successful, would take care of their concerns?

4. Look down each column and put themes you see in the intersection row. If you see words in common, use those words.

5. Using the words in the three intersection boxes, write a purpose statement that would be important to all five of you.

6. Imagine writing an email to each person inviting them to a meeting featuring the purpose you composed. Would they want to attend? If so, you are on the right track. If not, you have probably missed something important to the person or persons who would not attend. Who could help you redo the chart?

Conversation Prep Chart

Key people	Purposes (for)	Worries (against)	Circumstances (facts)
Me			
Intersecting themes			

Authentic shared purpose

CONVERSANT
HIGH-PERFORMANCE CONVERSATION