

Have your local emerging leader meetings turned stale? Are your conversations not-so-creative? Spice it up! Here are 11 ways to add some spice to the same old meeting:

11. **Pour into a new recipe**
Plan your meeting to coincide with a local cultural event. Members of your group can network with influential people in the community and share their creative ideas.
10. **Chill it on ice**
Ask an emerging leader in your group to research and lead a great icebreaker to kick off your meeting.
9. **Break up into food groups**
Breaking up into smaller groups based on artistic discipline or an individual's role within his/her organization may help peers engage in meatier discussions.
8. **Set the table differently**
Meet in an unconventional cultural setting—onstage at a local theater, in the middle of an outdoor sculpture garden, etc. Invite the group to tour the setting after the meeting and learn more about its mission within your community.
7. **Make it a potluck**
Ask each participant to write a topic on a card, toss them into a hat, and address each topic pulled from that hat for 5–10 minutes, depending on the size of your group and the length of your meeting.
6. **Invite strangers for dessert**
Well, not really strangers. Try inviting other groups of young professionals in your community to participate in a joint meeting. What issues are different for the two groups? What issues do you have in common? How might you work to face them together?
5. **Food for thought**
Invite a local artist to present at the meeting. It can be a very powerful reminder of why we do what we do.
4. **~~Don't~~ play with your food**
Provide crayons, colored paper, Legos, blocks, Nerf balls (you get the idea) at each table. Sometimes playing with small fun toys can help the brain relax and open up.
3. **What table?**
Throw out the chairs and provide cushions to sit on instead. An informal setting might lead to more creative thinking.
2. **Dinner and a show**
Invite a local business consultant to provide a skill-building workshop on public speaking, networking, negotiations, or career building. Offer to buy the consultant lunch or dinner and plug his/her business services in exchange.
1. **Season with a guest speaker**
Conversations with executive leaders are a great way to learn more about the current generation of leaders—pick their brains, see how they think, and find out what makes them tick. How similar or different are their views? How do you feel about the next generation of arts leaders?