Running Effective Meetings & Facilitation Skills

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What is Facilitation?

It’s always useful to start with a definition!

Facilitate (from Cambridge International Dictionary of English)

“to make possible or easier”

Facilitation is all about making a process, a decision or some work easier to achieve.

Why do people use facilitation?

- To work better, to work smarter, to work faster.
- To get the whole answer.
- To get more people involved.
- To get new ideas, wild ideas, great ideas.
- To foster understanding, support and follow-through.

Facilitation is a service to others.

The most important job of a facilitator is to protect the process of those being facilitated.

The process is how the group goes about accomplishing their task.

The problem or content is what they're working on.

How should we go about this? What should we do next? What do we need to do this? Should we stop or continue? Who do we need to talk to?

Facilitators…..

- Protect the process that is being used
- Help create the process
- Adjust the process
- Keep it heading in the right direction
- Keeps people focussed to the process

What is a Facilitator?

A facilitator is many things:

- A consultant who designs work sessions with a specific focus or intent.
- An advisor to bringing out the full potential of working groups.
- A provider of processes, tools and techniques that can get work accomplished quickly and effectively in a group environment.
- A person who keeps a group meeting on track.
- Someone who helps resolve conflict.
- Someone who draws out participation from everyone.
- Someone who organises the work of a group.
- Someone who makes sure that the goals are met.
- Someone who provides structure to the work of a group.
- Someone who protects the work of a group from the overhead of a group.

What a Facilitator Isn't

- Changing the wording of a participant.
- Refusal to record an idea
- Getting involved in the content of the group work.
- Fixing the group (even in the most loving way!)
- Fixing the problem for the group.
- Attaching to outcomes.
- Judging comments of the group, liking some ideas better than others.
- Flip flopping the agenda and work processes.
- Manipulating people and behaviours through their own feedback.
- Monopolising conversation.
- Taking sides on issues or people.
- Being closed to group suggestions on the process.
- Trying to have all the answers.

The Rolls Royce of Meetings!

Hopefully you have attended some meetings that have left a positive lasting impression on you!

Jot down what makes an excellent meeting.

The Usual Meetings We ALL Attend!

Write down the characteristics of meetings that you don't like.

Planning and Preparation

The key to successful facilitating is successful planning!

Unless you know what the objectives are, designing the session will be impossible!

Objectives

Know what your sponsor/organiser wants to get out of the meeting.

Ask the following 2 questions:

What is the purpose of the meeting?

This is the high level, overall requirements of the meeting. They are general in nature.

For example "I want to foster teamwork within the groups" or "I want us to make some difficult decisions"

What output is required from the meeting?

These are the tangibles!

They are the product or output from the meeting.

What is required?

A list of actions? A vision statement? An operating plan? Terms and conditions? Roles and responsibilities?

Never go into a meeting as a facilitator without having the answers to these questions.

How can you keep the team focussed if you don't know what it is you are there for yourself!

Structure/Framework of the session Working out which **PROCESS** to use for a session is an art form in itself! You need to know a good set of techniques and an appreciation of group dynamics. Follow this structure for success when putting together a facilitation session:

1. Clarify the purpose of the meeting.
2. Define the desired outcomes and output.
3. Determine who should attend.
4. Design the sequence of meeting activities.
   a. Pick a method for each step.
   b. Review and adjust your design by asking:

      Can I get from one step to the next smoothly? Are all steps necessary? How much time will it take? Will these methods work for this group? Is there anything about this method or topic that could blow up?

1. Decide how to begin and how to conclude the session.
2. Determine logistics, equipment and administrative needs.
3. Complete the agenda.
4. Finalise the design with your client.

The environment & equipment

This is something that is often overlooked but it really does set the tone of the whole session.

I pay particular attention to this as first impressions count to the attendees. You do not want attention drawn away from what you are trying to achieve to negative comments about the noise outside the room or the heating that will just not turn off!

- **Ambience of the room**

When you first enter the room, what is your first impression? Does it have natural light? Is the colour cheerful or drab?

- **Size matters!**

Is the room large enough for your needs? Will everyone be able to see your materials i.e flip or wallboard at the front? Will everyone be able to hear your voice at the front?

- **Chairs and desks**

Are the chairs comfortable? This is very important especially if you are having an all-day planning meeting for example

- **Hassle free!**

Is the room in close proximity to the toilets? To the restaurant? Where you will be having refreshments?

- **Heating!**

Can you control the temperature within the room and do you know how to do it!

Whatever you are doing make sure that the room is designed so that attendees can SEE and HEAR! That is priority number 1.

Equipment Checklist

- Flip chart easels
- Extension cords and power strips
- Overhead projector
- Screen
- Tape recorder for music
- VCR
- Television set
- Whiteboard
- Computers
- Printers
- Extra tables for overhead projector, materials, group breakout areas

Supply Checklist

- Transparencies
- Blank paper
- Extra flip chart paper
- Folders
- Big marker pens
- Colour pens
- Masking and transparent tape
- Pencils and pens
- Scissors
- Stapler
- Transparency pens
- Whiteboard markers and erasers
- Large self-sticking notes for all the participants

Support Checklist

- A client's representative for the facilitation needs to be provided. Always!

  This person will schedule appointments for you, be the liaison between you and the client, and coordinate everything required for the facilitation.
    - A person to record the session.
    - A refreshment table in the room providing light snacks and drinks.
    - Transportation for participants if necessary.
    - Travel arrangements

Arranging the room

A vital piece of planning is to determine what style of layout you would like for the room.

You don't have to accept how the room is delivered to you.

You need to think about the style of the session and also how best to optimise communications within the group.

You need to create a relaxed environment that will foster communications between people.

Types of layouts U-Shape

Y

U

This is the most popular used layout with the facilitator working at the open part of the U (Y).

The beauty of this layout is that there are no natural "Hierarchy positions" around the table for power plays!

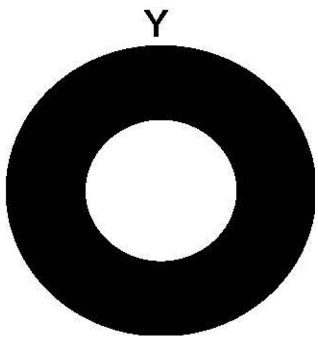
Don't use this layout if there are too many people attending however.

Semicircle

Y

For smaller groups. You at position Y.

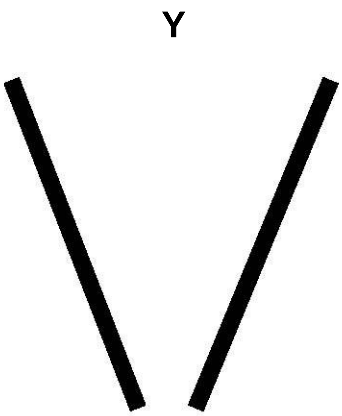
Round Table



If there is going to be lots of writing required within the room then the circle is a good alternative.

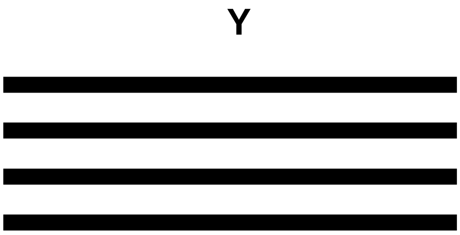
Leave an open space for your presentation materials at Y.

Herringbone



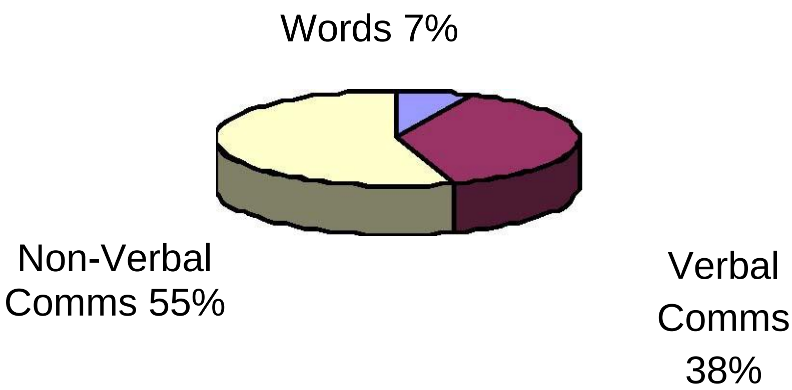
This is a variation you can use when you need a U-shape and there isn't room. Arrange two sets of tables in a herringbone shape with chairs on the outside only. The facilitator and equipment can face these two tables.

Rows



Never use this style for facilitation.

For seminars and conferences -yes. But not when people have to discuss and openly communicate with one another At the end of the day remember what effective communications are all about:



7% of what we communicate is the results of the words that we say, or the content of the communication

38% of our communication to others is a result of VERBAL behaviour. This includes the tonality of our voice, tempo, pitch, volume etc

55% of our communication to others is a result of our NON-VERBAL communication to others. Our body language is so important it makes up over half of the composition of successful communications. Examples include facial expressions, posture, breathing, moving etc.

The opening of the session

You will need to make a strong start to the session to:

- State why you are all there!
- Introduce what the attendees will be doing
- Describe what your role is and isn't
- Lay down the ground rules Making this first impression is very important to set the session off on the right
- foot and to also give the group focus and a clear expectation of what your role is throughout the day. Careful preparation is required to get this right. For successful introductory sessions I recommend the following structure:
- Introductions/Ice Breakers
- Thank everyone
- Explain your role as facilitator and what it isn't
- State the purpose and objective of the session
- Go through the agenda
- Explain what output is required from the session
- Develop house rules

Agenda

Always prepare an agenda in advance and give this as a handout.

Put it up on flipchart/OHP or computer as you describe it as well.

Ice-Breakers

Decide whether or not you need an ice-breaker depending on your participants

Does everyone know each other? Are they from different parts of the business?

What is the objective of your ice-breaker? Is it more like an energiser or do you want to get the participants to get to know one another? To summarise, the main reasons for having an ice- breaker can include:

- Helping to clarify group members' expectations and knowledge.
- Introducing participants to working within a group.
- Enhancing interpersonal relationships.
- Relieving anxiety/energiser.

House Rules

It is important to develop the house rules right up front!

House Rules are developed by the participants and written out and prominently displayed during the session. Not only are they norms for the participants, they're your norms as well. You begin by asking the group to develop the rules under which they, as a group, desire to guide their behaviour during the session. You might wish to ask them to think about the following two questions as they decide what would be effective rules for the group:

1. What behaviours do you feel are important to achieve success for this meeting?
2. What behaviours would you like others to exhibit and to which you are also willing to commit?

<u>The role of the facilitator – YOU!</u>

Always be sure to explain, at the beginning of the session, who you are and what your role is.

The group will not know your role until you tell them.

Tell them what you will do and what you will not do – lay it on the line so that there is not confusion!

Even those participants who have experienced facilitated sessions need this explanation since facilitation styles and responsibilities differ from session to session.

Facilitation techniques and methods

It's all well and good planning and having a great opening – but at the end of the day you are all there to produce an output or solve or a problem.

How are you going to do this?

You will do this by employing some techniques that you can use with the group to get ideas out in the open and to manage concerns.

The technique you use will have to be determined in the planning stage and it will depend upon the number of people, the type of output required, the objectives and also group dynamics.

Here are some of the most useful ones, however – never be scared to make one up on the spot.

Around the group technique

A technique to encourage contribution toward group decision making. The facilitator begins at one end of the table. Each person is given the chance to say how he or she views the issue, state their idea, etc. If a person chooses to say nothing in this round, he or she says "pass." Each person should be satisfied that he or she had a chance to influence the decision and declare a willingness or unwillingness to support it.

The term consensus means that support is derived from each person feeling heard and understood. This technique helps build and maintain group cohesiveness.

The Constructive Response

A technique used to create a product from breakout groups' individual products.

This is a very simple and very effective technique used by facilitators.

Basic Version:

Using the Go Around technique, have each person:

1. Say what they like about the idea or proposal under consideration, etc.
2. Next, ask each person to state their concerns.
3. Assist and encourage people to find ways to overcome the concerns.

Alternative Version:

This technique is especially valuable when a facilitator has a large group and must break them out into smaller groups.

When each team brings their proposal or solution back to the whole group, use the Constructive Response to examine each group's proposal. On the easel or chalkboard, list the likes and list the concerns with each group's proposal. Place them with that proposal on the wall or hang them together using easels.

When this is completed, the facilitator begins the process of having the group come up with the final product. One of two things generally happens:

1. The group combines the likes from each sub-group and there is no further need for the concerns lists.
2. The group combines all the likes from each sub-group and uses the concerns list as a check to make sure the group product has avoided anything that has caused concern to someone. If there is a concern, the group talks it out.

Take Five

A technique to accommodate different thinking styles or preferences and help discussions begin quickly and on-track.

Individuals have preferences in how they think and make decisions.

Some people, extroverts, prefer thinking out loud. Introverts prefer thinking silently.

The Take Five technique guarantees those with an introverted thinking style the time and silence they need for organising their thoughts.

Understanding others without trying to alter or judge their behaviour is an ability in itself. Allowing for differences maximizes each person's ability to contribute.

After you begin the session by stating the purpose for bringing the participants together, acknowledge the differing preferences or styles that people will be using during the session.

Tell them you'll use a technique that will accommodate their different thinking styles.

When assigning members to breakout groups, suggest each person take a few minutes (like five) to organise their thoughts and ideas.

They can make a written list if they wish.

You may ask participants to do this before the session begins and bring their notes. After this brief quiet period, the group then begins discussion.

This procedure permits those who need it, quiet time to organise their thoughts without distraction.

It's always advisable to provide advance information about a meeting. Extroverts don't need it and probably won't even read it, but introverts DO and WILL.

Put It In The Hangar

A technique to avoid sidetracks.

During the session, it's easy for groups to get off the issue, or get sidetracked by other issues, ideas or even people. Although such issues or ideas may later be determined to be relevant, their relevance is unclear at the moment. To capture these, label a piece of flip chart paper as The Hangar. Whenever a side issue or idea emerges, list it there. These issues can be addressed at a later time. This technique captures all ideas and issues during a session. It acknowledges the contribution or participation of each member, even if their idea or issue is not the primary one under consideration.

Brainstorming

A technique to generate ideas quickly.

Everyone is familiar with brainstorming.

The conceptual rules are:

- No criticism or evaluation
- Be unconventional
- Aim for quantity
- Hitchhike on other ideas

The practical rules are:

- Everyone contributes
- One idea per turn
- You may pass

Brainstorming can be modified and effectively used in certain situations which require the fast generation of ideas from a group.

In addition, varying the technique introduces a new way of brainstorming and of enjoying the unconventionality of these modifications.

Alternative #1

1. A time limit is set.
2. Each participant works alone.
3. Each participant puts his or her ideas on a 3 x 5" self-sticking note. Only one idea per note is allowed.
4. Each idea is posted to a wall, board, or easel.
5. At the end of the time period, the group uses grouping techniques, like the Affinity Diagram, to combine ideas.

Alternative #2. Same rules as above except:

1. Instead of self-sticking notes, each participant uses index cards. Again only one idea per card is allowed.
2. As they finish each card, participants say the idea out loud and throw the card into the middle of the group. The facilitator collects them as they're being thrown.

The alternatives have very real advantages for certain situations.

1. They take away judgement and censorship.
2. Pressure to perform is removed.
3. The volume of ideas generated increases.

Because brainstorming produces a lot of ideas without filtering, be sure you know what to do next with the product of the brainstorm and make sure that the participants know what is going to happen as well.

Nominal Group Technique (NGT):

A technique which combines brainstorming and the benefits of individual thought.

NGT is a technique used to:

1. Identify processes.
2. Develop a process statement.
3. List the causes that reduce process effectiveness.
4. Prepare for data collection.
5. Identify solutions that improve processes.

   NGT reduces the tendency of groups to evaluate ideas when they're presented.

   NGT is a method of drawing out as many ideas as possible and then reducing the field of ideas to just a few.

   The goal of NGT is to be as expansive with ideas as possible and then to select the most workable ideas the group can use to go on to the next step in the process.

   The facilitator guides the group through the NGT steps.

1. Group members silently generate a list of ideas on paper.

2. All ideas are recorded on a large sheet of paper. Once group members appear to have finished listing their ideas silently, the facilitator will begin by having the member to the immediate right or left give the first idea on his or her list. The facilitator will write the idea, exactly as expressed, on the paper. Initials of the individual giving the idea may be placed on the sheet by his or her idea if further clarification may be needed. Otherwise, don't pin ideas to people. Let ideas become group ideas.

Items should be numbered and written so that they may be easily read by the entire group. When an idea is recorded, it shouldn't be explained or clarified, merely posted. This process continues with each member giving one idea per turn, until all of the members' ideas are exhausted.

3. Ideas are discussed for clarification. Once all the ideas have been listed, the facilitator will go around the group again and ask each member in turn if there are any items on the list which are not understood or which need to be clarified.

4. Once all items have been clarified and are understood, the group participates in an anonymous vote on the ideas. The voting is accomplished on secret ballots, which are then passed to a group member to be read and recorded. After tabulation, the group can easily see which of the items is of greatest interest to the group. The natural by-product of this step is that the group's attention is directed to the items that received the largest number of votes. If votes are evenly distributed, that fact captures the group's attention. The purpose of this step is to determine where group interest lies. Remember that all items listed, no matter how few votes they may have received, remain candidates for future consideration until the group decides otherwise.

5. The group discusses remaining items, if necessary. At this point, all group members should understand what is meant by each item on the list. If a member has strong feelings about an item that was not selected, the member should explain to the group why he or she feels so strongly. If the individual feels strongly that the item should be placed on the selected list, place it there.

6.When all discussion has been exhausted, the group ranks items selected through a weighted voting process. Once again, each member will cast an anonymous paper ballot, but this time each vote will be weighted on the basis of the total number of items included in the vote. For example, if five items are included in the vote, each member will give five votes to the item that is most important, four votes to the second most important item, and so on.

Multi-voting:

A technique to reduce the number of ideas to a manageable size.

The objective in Multi-Voting is to reduce the number of ideas, not to arrive at a final choice.

It can be used when brainstorming has generated too many items to be addressed at one time.

1. Group members vote for as many ideas from the list as they wish, but may cast only one vote for each item.
2. The list is trimmed by half, with those ideas having the fewest votes dropped.
3. Each member votes for half of the remaining ideas.
4. The voting process continues until the predetermined number of ideas is reached.

The Affinity Diagram:

A technique to organise facts or issues into groups or clusters.

This technique is useful if the problem or issue is highly complex and needs the total involvement of the group. First, present the problem or issue to the group. Then do Brainstorming. Set a time limit like seven minutes. Ask members to silently generate as many ideas as possible. Have them place each idea on a separate self-sticking note. Give members big markers so the word or phrases they write can be read easily. When the time is up, place all self-sticking notes on a wall. Ask group members to begin organising them into groups or clusters that appear to have some sort of relationship. As the groups or clusters are developed, each begins to have a closer relationship with the issues or facts placed with them.

Each member is free to change the self-sticking notes.

When it appears the group members have reached consensus and are satisfied with the relationships, the information can then be used to continue work on the issue or problem.

This technique works very well for a comprehensive agenda item like developing organisational values, as well as for a very specific agenda item like defining all the tasks needed to complete a work activity.

This technique isn't for problems or issues that require immediate solution.

Group Evaluation:

There will be times when you'll be working with groups who need to evaluate themselves.

The information will help you and the group to modify activities, resolve conflicts, make better use of time, or solve problems differently. There are a variety of ways to do this.

One simple way is to decide which areas would benefit from evaluation.

The following is a list of commonly used categories:

Goals Commitment Procedures and Guidelines Roles Participation Trust Conflict Hidden Agendas Timing Level of interest Synergy Feelings Problem solving Methods Facilitation (yes, ask how you're doing also!)

Develop a rating scale for each area.

We suggest a rating scale of one to five to keep it simple.

Have one be the low end and five be the high end.

For each end, give an appropriate description so everyone understands what's being asked.

The following are examples to help you design your own:

Facilitation

1234 5 Inappropriate amount of Just the
right amount direction

Trust

1234 5 Low level of trust High level of trust

The rating scale evaluation can be used for a group that's been working together for awhile.

It can also be used as a diagnostic tool for a facilitated session designed to improve the teamwork of the participants.

Before the session, the questionnaire can be given to the participants.

Ask them to complete the evaluation anonymously.

Explain to them that this information will be used to discuss how to improve the group's working together.

Another evaluation format is a list of questions that allow each person to state their thoughts about each question.

This method takes longer to do and will require time to compile the results. However, it provides more in-depth information than the rating scale.

The following is an example:

How Well are We Working Together?

1. How did you feel when you first formed this group (or team)?
2. How do you feel now?
3. Which of the group's (or team's) goals do you think you've achieved?
4. What unresolved conflicts do you think this group (or team) needs to address?
5. What prevents you from being more committed, interested or participate more?
6. How can the facilitator help your group (or team) move forward?
7. Does your group (or team) need any additional ground rules or procedures?
8. What isn't happening that, if it did happen, would make your group (or team) more successful?
9. What are the three best things about your group (or team)?
10. What is the one thing you'd like to see happen that you think is impossible for your group (or team)?

Top Tips!

1. **ALWAYS remain objective and fair**
2. **Keep EVERTYHING visible**
3. **Record EVERYTHING!**

Have 2 flips in the room on the wall at ALL times. An action point flip and a "Take it off line" flip. Where there is talk, there is usually an ACTION POINT. Post up ideas, actions, comments and issues so they can be addressed.

4. Involve the group whenever you can

Meetings are boring when all you do is sit.

Many techniques lend themselves to active participation from the group.

When designing the work process steps for the session, always question activities that involve the traditional I'll stand up front and write, you take turns talking.

These activities can often be done in a style where the participants take a physically active role.

For example, in brainstorming, have participants write their own ideas on large sticky notes, pass them to you and you post them. Besides engaging the group, it speeds up the process.

5. Don't be afraid to cut off people who are going on and on.

This can be hard to do the first couple of times, but you'll have to turn in your facilitator license if you don't learn it by your second session.

One technique is to suggest The Five Minute Rule during the development of group norms.

This is the right for anyone in the session to call "five minutes" on anyone else if they think the discussion is going on and on and not leading anywhere.

State the group's right to call it on you too!

Usually it will be used at least once in a session and it's always done with humour. For some reason, this technique "saves face" of the talker or talkers. Once it's called, it's effect seems to last for quite some time. Use a bell at the front or back of the room and a participant has to get up and go over to the bell and ring it!

6. Use your space wisely

Standing allows you to own the space and move easily.

Standing can be a power and control tactic and there are situations where that's undesirable. Walk into problem participants. If someone is being destructively aggressive you can temper them by taking advantage of their personal space. Step away from shy, retiring participants while they speak, but keep your attention focused solely on them so that others will give them time to speak.

7. You're the middle man remember!

A lot of the time, the group will be speaking to you and not the group.

We recommend you always tell people this up front, during your facilitator's role introduction.

Say something like:

"You'll tend to address your comments to me, because I'm standing up front, but it's really each other you want to talk to. You also might seek my approval on ideas since I have the biggest magic marker, but remember, I don't own the outcome, I just care that there is one."

You then need to reinforce this with your actions because the natural tendency is to talk to the person up front.

Here are effective ways of redirecting the conversation back to the group:

- If you're asked a question, especially if it's a "content approval" question, put it out to the group or an individual for answering. Ask Would anyone like to answer that? or I don't know, ask the group. Begin this early in the session and soon participants will skip the middle man (that's you) and begin addressing each other directly.

- Move behind the speaker. The speaker usually will speak to the group in front of them instead of turning 180 degrees around to talk to you.

- Look at another group member while you're being spoken to.

- Sit down at the side of the table and direct your focus at the group, away from the speaker.

- A round table or U-shaped configuration naturally encourages conversation within the group.

8. Make yourself redundant!

The greatest compliment to a facilitator is to have the group outgrow them.

Remember, high performance groups don't need facilitators. Your job won't be at risk until the world has only high performance groups! There are two factors for you to consider. One is to not build a dependency on you in the first place. The other is to provide the group with tools and experience they can use on their own.

Many facilitators build in dependencies on themselves, from the group, through their behaviour. This may happen because the facilitator doesn't believe in the inherent intelligence and capability of the group. Tell-tale behaviours include:

- Allowing the group to address them instead of each other.
- Answering too many content questions.
- Not making the work visible and available for everyone.
- Always having to have the answer.
- Unwillingness to release control when the group is doing fine on their own.
- Disrupting progress by taking the group on a tangent or forcing them to do it your way.
- Being closed to suggestions.

To build the group's capability to manage themselves, allow the group every opportunity to accomplish things without you, as soon as they appear to be working together.

Start this early in the session if possible.

9. THEY have ownership, NOT you

Some groups don't want to own their problem.

That may be the reason the problem couldn't be solved in the normal work environment. Ways to make sure this doesn't happen are:

- Always be on the lookout for signs that you're being held responsible for the solution.
- When an after-the-session task is identified, have the group assign a responsible person to it.
- When an in-session task arises, like sorting a list, categorising ideas, or editing work, have the group or a sub-group or a participant perform it.
- Don't accept or volunteer for follow-on work from the session.
- Make sure the group addresses all issues raised in the session.
- Follow the guidelines for getting the group to talk to each other.

10. Read the signs!

The group and the individuals in it are giving off continuous signals about their attention level, frustration level, participation level and enjoyment level.

Learn to read the energy signals of both the group as a whole and the individual members and take appropriate action.

Ask yourself What am I seeing or what am I sensing?

If you aren't presently comfortable trusting your intuition, you can learn to trust it. You'll sense energy flows of the group or individuals being blocked.

Ask yourself Why? Trust the first answer that pops into your mind. There may be a need for a break or for a few minutes of talk to clarify a task. Ask:

> How are we doing? Are we accomplishing what we want to? Is the pace right? Are we getting anywhere? Do you like the technique we're using? Are you having fun?

11. If you are stuck what do you do!

Ask the group. Enlist them as your allies. You're much more credible if you know when to ask for help. If they invent a technique, it becomes their technique and they love it. Remember, people support what they help create.

12. Be flexible!

Go into the event as loose as you can be. Yes, you have gone in with a plan but be flexible to THEIR needs not YOURS!

13. Preserve the integrity of the group and every individual.

Never

- Admonish a participant or the group
- Insult the organisation or anyone in it
- Insult an outside organisation or person
- Argue with a participant
- Ignore a participant
- Endorse gossip
- Support deprecating remarks
- Take sides on an issue
- Endorse some participants and not others
- Disapprove of an action, comment, or behaviour (watch body language)

Do

- Take diversity training
- Welcome all feedback from participants
- Allow all comments, even "the stupid ones"

14. Consensus

Here are some guidelines for helping the group to achieve consensus.

- Help group members to avoid arguing for their own position. If needed, help them present it logically, but be prepared to intervene.
- Look for win-win alternatives. As the facilitator, you're working for collaboration and cooperation, not competition where there are winners and losers.
- If agreement seems to come too quickly, be suspicious. Some people change to avoid conflict. Explore the reasons. Be sure everyone accepts the solution for similar or complementary reasons.
- Avoid conflict reducing techniques such as majority vote, coin flips, and bargaining. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. They increase the group's decision-making ability by providing a greater range of information and opinions. As the facilitator, you have techniques to use for the group to come to consensus, such as the Nominal Group Technique or Multi-Voting.

15. Pulling it all together.

The most valuable tips come from mistakes that I have made!

To help you keep on track, as you integrate and add to your knowledge, you might use questions such as these during breaks and between sessions to evaluate your own progress.

- Are we producing the products?
- Am I sticking to the agenda?
- Is everyone participating?
- Any dysfunctional behaviour?
- Do they need a break or change-of-pace activity?
- Is anyone frustrated?
- Can everyone see what the group is doing?
- Am I being objective?

When to intervene?

1. Immediately -- because the consequences of not intervening would have some serious impact on the group.
2. At the first opportunity (end of a topic discussion or at some change in the task activity). The facilitator may choose to allow small conceptual or process issues to go uncorrected to see how and when anyone handles the issue or to allow the group to learn from its own behaviours.

4. At some later time because the activity will occur again and provide a better opportunity for the group to accept intervention.

Managing People!

When people come together to do group work without a facilitator, their behaviour can be very different than the behaviour they assume under the leadership of a skilled facilitator.

A skilled facilitator will assist them to be the best they can be together.

In making that very positive statement, we suggest you prepare yourself for human behaviour in all of its forms.

Group Behaviours

Let's begin talking about people by talking about the roles people need to play in groups.

We generally call this group dynamics.

Your awareness of the roles people need to play in groups can assist you in helping the group achieve success.

When you become familiar with these roles, you'll be able to see who's playing what role and if all the roles are being played.

If they aren't, you, as facilitator, can identify the gaps and work with the group to encourage someone to step forward and assume the missing role.

At times you may find yourself taking on missing roles.

It's to the group's advantage to be made aware of what's missing and learn how to check themselves for any missing roles when the session seems to be dragging.

This will allow the group to not only produce the outcomes and products, but to maintain their effectiveness in working as a group as well.

The roles fall into two categories:

- Task Roles --necessary for task completion.

- Maintenance Roles --necessary for the health or well-being of the team.

Some roles are required for both task completion and team well-being. For the purposes of facilitator awareness, we're going to briefly list and explain these roles.

Role Description of the

Behaviour Encourager

Friendly and responsive to others, offers praise, accepts other's points of view.

Mediator

Mediates differences, relieves tension in conflict situations, gets people to explore their differences.

Compromiser

When his or her own idea is involved in a conflict, offers compromise and tries to maintain group cohesion.

Gatekeeper

Keeps communication open, suggests ways to share information with others.

Initiator

Proposes tasks or goals, suggests ways to solve problems.

Opinion Giver

Information or Offers facts, states beliefs or opinions.

Opinion Seeker

Information or Asks for facts, ideas, opinions or suggestions.

Elaborator

Interprets ideas or suggestions, clears up confusion, gives examples.

Coordinator

Pulls together related suggestions, offers conclusions for the group to accept or reject.

Diagnostician

Helps the group to identify where problems are occurring.

Standard Setter

Helps the group define standards, what's expected, what's acceptable.

Follower

Goes along with whatever is being proposed, agreeable to what the group wants.

Please think about these roles and their importance.

Imagine a group meeting where all the roles have been played except for the role of coordinator.

How would that affect the meeting? What would you, as the facilitator, do? Imagine a group meeting where all the roles have been played except for the role of diagnostician. How would that affect the meeting? What would you, as the facilitator, do? Imagine a group meeting where no roles were being played except for the role of following. How would that affect the meeting? What would you, as the facilitator, do?

Individual Behaviours

The most challenging problems in our lives generally involve our relationships to other individuals.

When interacting with challenging or difficult people, a tactful approach that maintains individual self esteem wins greater respect and results.

To maintain the self esteem of each individual (and yourself), don't allow an attack on any individual or yourself.

Emotional conflict shifts a person's concern from problem solving to defending their position.

As the facilitator, you shift the focus back to the issue the group is working.

Emphasize that the session's purpose is to produce the best group solution. This reflects what's acceptable, workable, and meets the needs of the group, not the needs of a single individual.

When you're faced with dysfunctional behaviour in a session, it may be handled by you in two ways: direct confrontation in the meeting or off-line with the individual.

The I technique and the F technique allow feelings to be stated. No one can attack another for his or her feelings.

The I technique is very simple. Here is what you say:

When you....... I feel....... I would like .... Because....

The 3F technique is very similar and just as simple. Here is what you say:

I understand how you
feel, I have felt that way
before, Here's what I've
found.......

You'll discover that the group can also be a source of help to you and to each other.

We generally refer to this behaviour as peer pressure.

When one person's behaviour begins to become disruptive, often someone in the group will take on the role of mediator, diagnostician or another role that's appropriate and attempt to solve the disrupter's problem or identify the cause of the behaviour.

There are a variety of problem behaviours that can be detrimental to the group members and their work.

We will describe some common types, by their behaviour, and follow them with strategies to deal with that behaviour.

Dealing with problem people!

The Know It All

This person appears as the expert, wants constant attention and often argues with people.

Strategies include:

- Be well prepared for the topic under discussion.
- Listen and paraphrase what they say.
- Don't challenge --ask questions to lead them to see their errors.
- Praise their ability.
- Focus on solutions.
- Ask other group members to comment on what they heard, redirecting focus away from the Know-It-All.
- Have them summarise their thoughts and record them.

The Sniper

This person attacks and criticizes, usually indirectly, masking their aggression by using humour or saying things under their breath.

Strategies include:

- Address the behaviour openly, asking them why they said that.
- Ask others if they agree with the criticism.
- Don't let them hide behind humour.
- Address sniping each time it occurs, until it stops.

The Talker

This person distracts by holding side conversations.

Strategies include:
- Say, "There are little meetings going on. May we have just one meeting?"
- Ask the person directly to share their thoughts with everyone (use tact and diplomacy).

The Quiet Type

This person is quiet or timid. Their silence is often mistaken for agreement.

Strategies include:

- Address them by name and ask them to share their thoughts. Focus your attention directly on them to create the time and space they need to answer.
- Commend their participation when it occurs.
- Talk to them before the session, casually, to help them become comfortable.
- Ask them some safe things early in the session to get them involved.

The Complainer/Whiner

This person tries to put you on the spot to fix it. He or she blames others and never self.

Strategies include:

- Don't be defensive.
- Listen and acknowledge, don't argue.
- Ask questions.
- Solicit solutions from them.
- Encourage them to act.

The Bulldozer

This person will try to run over you and everyone else too! It's their method of stopping progress, because progress scares them.

If they can't change, they may leave.

At a facilitated session, bulldozers may leave the room a lot and will have a host of legitimate reasons for doing so!

Strategies include:

- Stand up to them in a non-combative way.
- Don't argue with them. Present the facts.
- Get them into problem solving mode.
- Protect the space of those they bulldoze, by asking the bulldozed to repeat their thought or by asking others in the group how they feel.

Hair-Splitting

This person wants absolute answers and definitions.

Strategies include:
- Acknowledge their need for absolute answers and definitions.
- State what you're prepared to give.
- Ask them to honour your work or style preferences just as you accept theirs.

The Interrupter

This person interrupts the person speaking.

Strategies include:
- Say, "You interrupted me. Please let me finish my thoughts."
- Whenever they do it, repeat the preceding statement.

The Staller

This person tells irrelevant stories or experiences. They don't focus and instead

give off base types of examples. Strategies include:
- Ask them how what they said relates?
- Help them to be honest.
- Try to find out their hidden concerns.
- Record their idea on The Hangar.

The Inarticulate Person

This person has ideas but has problems putting the ideas into words.

Strategies include:

- Encourage them to speak.
- Exhibit patience when they speak.
- Ask them for permission to help them phrase or rephrase.

Now you have some knowledge about challenging people and strategies to deal with them. What do you do with the ideal person?

The Ideal Person

This person has good ideas and expresses them freely at appropriate times. They're congenial. They work well with others. They smile and laugh easily, even at themselves.

Strategies include:

- Acknowledge them frequently
- Always learn from them

Facilitating Typical Meeting Situations

Please think about the following situations. You're the facilitator. How would you handle each situation?

1. Latecomers.
2. Inappropriate comments directed at you or at other group members.
3. Participants not talking.
4. People who derail the subject being discussed.
5. People talking to each other instead of the group.
6. People monopolising discussion.
7. Sexist comments.
8. The client changing an agenda item on the spot.
9. An uncomfortable room (too hot/cold/noisy/etc.)
10. A person vying with you for control.
11. The Devil's Advocate type.
12. The Doom and Gloom type.
13. The Show Off type.
14. The Nonstop-Talker.

Types of sessions

Here is a partial listing of different types of sessions which benefit from facilitation services:

- Visioning
- Problem Solving
- Structured Methods
- Open Discussion
- Conflict Resolution
- Subject Matter Expert Brainstorming
- Focus Groups
- Instruction
- Transitions (Reinventing The Organisation)
- Team Building
- Strategic Planning
- Process Improvement
- Data Modeling
- Process Modeling
- Product Review

Basic facilitation steps apply to the design and conduct of these business meetings.

However, the techniques you'll use will vary according to the session type.

Question Lists

A facilitator seldom can have too many questions.

We recommend keeping a variety of question lists to use either with your client or with your group.

As you design your session, you may find it advisable to work from these lists, particularly when neither of you has clarity on products or outcomes.

You usually find one of your question lists is perfect for use by the group when you're in session.

Once you have a variety of lists, it's easy to tailor lists of questions appropriate for your current facilitation.

General Question List

1. What opportunities are possible in our situation?
2. How can we adapt to this change?
3. How can we improve the way we do business?
4. What else can we produce with the skills and resources we already have?
5. How can we make this system, procedure, product, service better?
6. What are some other uses for this?
7. If we do this, what could go wrong?
8. How can we resolve this difficult, complex, or unusual problem?
9. How can we gain support for this initiative?
10. How can we turn this negative situation to our advantage?
11. What impact will this idea, program, or system have on our employees or customers?

Process Improvement Question List

1. Who are our supplies and customers in this process?
2. Which features of our products and/or services are most important to them?
3. What characteristics of our products or services could be improved?
4. What operations have the greatest effect on our products or services?
5. How does performance of our operations need to change?
6. How will it impact our existing systems?
7. Have we gotten any complaints from our customers in the last three months?
8. Has anyone talked to our customers in the last three months about our products or services?
9. What's going wrong that we can fix right now?
10. How much will it cost?

Strategic Planning Question List

1. What do we do best?
2. Who are our customers?
3. Who will our customers be in the future?
4. Will our products or services be the same?
5. Does our organisational culture support the critical areas of our business?
6. Where's our organisation headed?
7. Are we controlling our organisation's direction? If not, why not? What might we do about it?
8. What are the key factors in our success so far? Are we supporting these factors? If so, how? If not, why not? What, if anything must we change in order to have everyone in the organisation focus on them?

Organisation Self Analysis Question List

1. Why are we in business?
2. What are our basic products or services?
3. Who are our primary customers of these products or services?
4. What major activities are involved in providing each product or service?
5. Who provides us with information, material, services to help us do our job or provide our products or services?
6. What are the two things they do well? How does that help us do our job?
7. What's one thing we would change if we could? How would the change help us do our job better?
8. What things do we do that aren't directly related to the products or services we're in business to provide? Why do we do them? Should we continue doing them? What do we need to do to stop doing them?
9. How do we evaluate success? Does it compliment or conflict with what our customers want or need? What could we evaluate that might be more meaningful? How can we shift our focus?
10. What changes could we make that would provide higher customer satisfaction? What would delight them?
11. What's currently helping us or preventing us from providing the best possible products or services to our customers? How can we reduce or eliminate hindrance and build on the helpers?
12. What's currently helping us become a high performing organisation?
13. What's hindering our becoming a high performing organisation?
14. How can we reduce or eliminate hindrance and build on the helpers to become a high performing organisation?

Closing the session

Close the session by summarising what has occurred.

Do it verbally and visually so that everyone sees and hears what has been realised as outcomes and products.

Help put the results of the group's work into an overall, big-picture framework.

During the session, the group was doing the parts.

You, as facilitator, tie the parts together into the whole when you summarise the session.

This gives group members a sense of completion and feedback for work well done.

Thank the participants for their efforts and their cooperation with you and each other to make this session so successful, easy and fun.

We won't deny that you may experience a difficult session.

However, with careful planning and preparation, you seldom will.

If you do, process your emotions and let them go.

Become objective and this experience will provide you with very valuable "lessons learned."

If your client is present, turn the session over to him or her for closing remarks.

Confidence, Body Language & Nerves!

So, what are the qualities of a good speaker?

Here are a list of the qualities and characteristics of a good public speaker/presenter.

Make sure you include these points when you have to speak in public

1. They talk to us as though we are having a conversation
2. They speak our language
3. They look as though they are enjoying themselves.
4. They inspire us to find out more about the subject
5. They tell stories/use the human-interest angle
6. Someone who conjures up pictures in our mind
7. They don't talk for hours
8. They let us know where we are going
9. They look at us-not their notes
10. They stress important points and pause to allow ideas to sink in
11. The talk appears well prepared but has an air of spontaneity

The importance of body language

Don't forget your non-verbal action signals!

You will want to look confident even though you may not be on the inside.

Don't just stand there, with your arms by the side of you!

ACT CONFIDENTLY and you will **FEEL CONFIDENT!**

Try it, it really works.

So, how do you act confidently?

- **With your posture -wall tall with your head up.**
- **Smile**
- **Maintain eye contact**
- **Handshake**
- **Move around**
- **Gestures**
- **Relax**

Speak with confidence as well.

People will believe what they see more than what they hear, but once you look confident, you have to sound the part too!

- **Breathing**
- **Sound quality of your voice**
- **Pitch**
- **Speed**
- **Tone**
- **Pausing**
- **Listening**
- **Use confident words**

15 Ways to overcome your STAGE FRIGHT!

1. Be well prepared. Rehearse several times
2. Co-operate with your body -rest, eat and sleep well beforehand
3. Dress in clothes that make you feel good
4. Take several deep breaths to relax your body
5. Concentrate on the messages you want to get over to your audience
6. Move around and release your nervous energy.
7. Visualise yourself doing well
8. Remember that your audience want you to do well
9. Think of a similar occasion in the past when you did it before and did it well. Think about it for a moment.
10. Make no negative confessions "I'm so nervous"
11. Put the situation into perspective
12. If you get nerves during your talk, move around or do something different to get into a different "state"
13. Pick out some friendly faces and make eye contact with them
14. If you make a mistake you make a mistake, laugh at it and the audience with laugh with you. Make a joke out of it.
15. The more you do it the better you will become. Practise makes perfect.