



Facilitation Skills

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Overview

- Introductions
- Goals for the session
- Expectations and Interests



What is a Facilitator?

- A person acceptable to the group
- Substantively neutral or objective
- Intervenes to help a group improve its processes, solves problems, and makes decisions



What a Facilitator Does

- Plans, guides and manages a group event
- Ensures group's objectives are met effectively with
 - Clear thinking
 - Good participation
 - Buy-in from all involved
- Creates a group process and environment to flourish to help reach a successful decision, solution or conclusion



Types of Facilitation

- Basic facilitation – group seeks to solve a substantive problem
- Developmental – group seeks to permanently improve its process while solving substantive problems



Two Types of Facilitators

- Facilitator

- Third party
- Substantively neutral
- Process expert
- No decision-making authority

- Facilitative Leader

- Leader of group
- Deeply involved in substantive issues
- Content and process expert
- Has decision-making authority



The Secret to Great Facilitation

- The group process should flow and with it group's ideas, solutions and decisions
- Design and plan
- Guide and Control



Design and Plan

- Focus on Outcomes
 - Start with “statement of wild success”
 - Clear definition of outcomes or goals
- Design group process
 - Open discussion vs. structured process
 - Large group or small breakouts
 - Design the agenda
 - Room set-up and supplies



Guide and Control

- Ground rules
- Set the scene
- Introductions and ice breakers
- Watch energy level of group
- Listen, engage and include
- Summarize often



Facilitator Tips

- Nudge the quiet ones
- Curb the longwinded
- Reign in the tangents
- Control outbursts
- Don't dismiss ideas immediately
- Use participants' words



Summarize

- Invaluable skill for a meeting chair
- Use it to end a topic or discussion
- Use it to limit discussion
- End the meeting with a clear overview of what took place and what action is now required



Summarize

- Requires active listening
- State concisely what was said in an impartial way
- End with a clear statement of what is expected next
- Takes practice
- Gives sense of accomplishment to the group



Questioning Techniques

- Open and Closed
- Direct and Indirect
- Pre-directed
- Funnel questions
- Probing
- Leading
- Rhetorical



Questions can be Powerful

- Learning
- Relationship building
- Managing and coaching
- Avoid misunderstanding
- Diffuse heated situations
- Persuading people



Handling Answers

- Positive
- Acknowledgement
- Learning of full group



Response to Questions

- Provide answer
- Redirect to the same person or the group
- Defer the question



Handling Challenges

- Eliminate or minimize disruptive behavior
- Maintain self-esteem of participants
- Avoid further disruption



Record and Action

- Use group words
- Record decisions and actions
- Select a scribe
- Clarify and summarize
- Record responsibility and commitments



To be Effective

- Balance of leadership and neutrality
- Prepare and think through the process
- Be positive and encouraging
- Be clear and concise
- Use time wisely



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