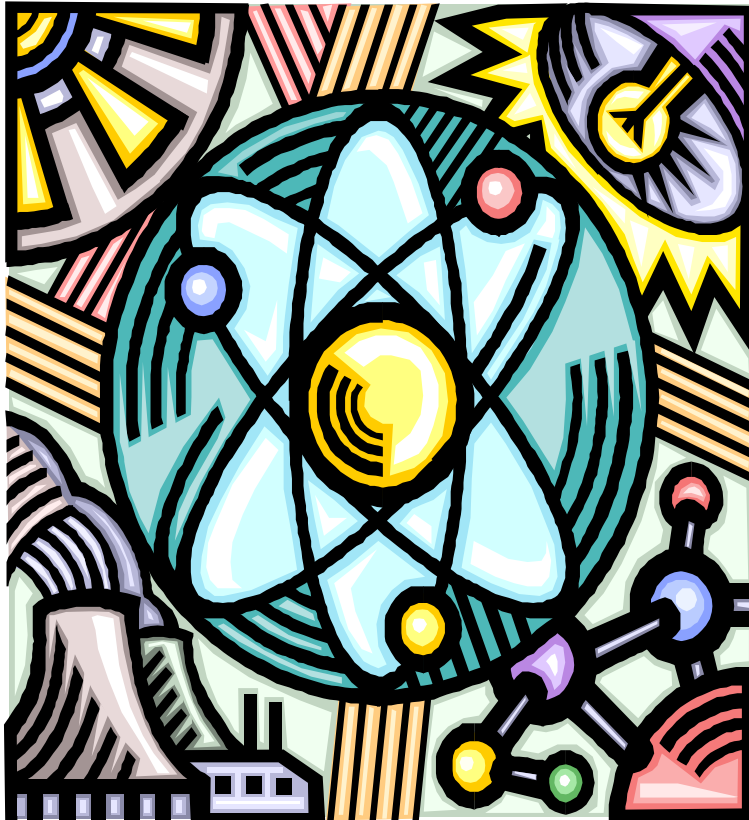


# Basic Facilitation Skills



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## PREFACE

What you are about to read is the result of the dedication and hard work of several professional organizations and individuals. The ASQ Human Development and Leadership Division sponsored and enlisted both the Association for Quality and Participation and the International Association of Facilitators membership to collaborate on this basic meeting facilitation guide. This marks the first collaborative publication effort for HD&L and, we hope, not the last. The Authors realize the need to assemble additional facilitation guides that will capture more specific information. The next Primer will be published and ready for distribution at the 2003 Annual Quality Congress in Kansas City next year.

As the HD&L Publication Committee Chair, it has been my pleasure to work with this very talented and selfless group of professionals. On behalf of the Human Development and Leadership Division, I want to express our thanks to their dedication, professionalism, and spirit of volunteerism. We sincerely hope you will find this 2002 Primer useful, and appreciate your comments, suggestions, and opinions. You can contact any member of the 2002 Basic Facilitation Primer Team at their Email address.

Dennis W. Burke

## 2002 Basic Facilitation Primer Team Members

Dennis W. Burke  
TRW Automotive  
*dennis.burke@trw.com*

Melanie Donahoe  
Pelco, Inc.  
*mdonahoe@pelco.com*

Rudolph Hirzel  
IdeaWorks  
*ideawork@bigtools.com*

Linda Mather  
Forums Institute for  
Public Policy  
*lmather@forumsinstitute.org*

Gail Morgenstern  
Morgenstern Associates  
*GSMorgen@aol.com*

Ned Ruete  
Computer Sciences Corp.  
*nruete@csc.com*

Ed Smith  
Pelco, Inc.  
*esmith@pelco.com*

Deborah Starzynski  
Starzynski Consulting  
Associates Inc.  
*deb.starzynski@starzynski.net*

Jo Ann Stoddard  
School for Managing and  
Leading Change  
*joann@aqp.org*

## INTRODUCTION

This primer presents a basic introduction to facilitation. Consistent with the mission and vision of the Human Development and Leadership Division, it is assumed that anyone can perform basic meeting, team, or group facilitation given the right tools and opportunity. We hope that this primer will provide a basic guide for those who are periodically called upon to facilitate and for those who are first time practitioners. We realize that a document of this size cannot possibly be inclusive. As a result, this primer represents the first of a series on facilitation skills, techniques, and competencies.

Facilitators can serve many different roles including developmental intervention in meetings, running workshops, conducting experience-based training, and guiding team development. The focus of this primer is on the role of the facilitator in relation to meetings. It is recognized that many meetings involve teams. However, there also exist many situations where meetings are held to share information and make decisions, in which the participants are not recognized as a team. It is for these kinds of meetings that this primer may be especially useful, though the information provided here is equally applicable to team meetings.

## WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?

A facilitator is someone who uses knowledge of group processes to formulate and deliver the needed structure for meeting interactions to be effective. The facilitator focuses on effective processes (meeting dynamics) allowing the participants to focus on the content or the substance of their work together.



Other roles exist for meeting participants besides facilitation. These include scribing, recording, timekeeping and leading discussions. The Facilitator's role is unique, although no more or less important, since their primary focus is on the meeting processes. Facilitation can involve many different levels of knowledge and skill, can include work on all kinds of problems and challenges, can assist the group in fulfilling its desire, or can include pushing participants to new levels of understanding. Most importantly, however, facilitation includes both an ability to recognize when effective meeting processes are needed and an ability to provide those processes.

In its loosest definition, a facilitator is any person who jumps up during a meeting and starts writing

key points on a chalkboard as they are being discussed. Or someone who puts up a hand and suggests that the participants focus on a single problem. Or even a participant who suggests that they find out a little about each other, or agree on how they're going to make decisions. These actions that define facilitators are based on an intuitive sense that something in the meeting is amiss. Though this intuition is fundamentally important to good facilitation, it must be emphasized that intuition alone does not replace an understanding of the skills and techniques that are the foundation for the profession.

## WHY DO MEETINGS NEED FACILITATORS?

People come together and meet for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the participants are referred to as teams, groups or committees. Although these terms are used interchangeably, it is generally recognized that teams have a common bond, interdependency, and/or commitment to a goal. Groups, on the other hand, are usually not as cohesive, not accountable to each other, and may meet on a less regular basis. In either case, the techniques discussed in this primer



apply equally to teams or groups because both need to meet to be effective. The basic assumption underlying meetings is that two (or more) heads are better than one, and better decisions can be made if there is more input. However, to assure that better decisions are made, the meeting often needs to be facilitated. In fact, a well-facilitated team meeting generally is both more effective and more efficient. Meetings occur for a number of reasons where participants are called upon to:

- make decisions
- share information
- plan work
- learn from one another
- create buy-in
- solve problems



The results of these actions may be seen in the design of a new product, improvements to a system, development of a marketing plan, or suggestions for improving work conditions. In some cases, the meeting may have more than one purpose or the purpose may shift over time. For example, after designing the plan, the meeting discussion may move on to creating buy-in for the plan.

No matter what the meeting's purpose, participants need to clearly understand the goal and how to work

together. One misconception about meetings is that getting all the experts in the same room will automatically produce good results. In actuality, getting the experts together is just the beginning, the beginning of being able to work together effectively.

Learning to work together does not necessarily come naturally. Nor is it always easy. The role of the facilitator is to help the participants learn how to work together by providing the structure (process) while they remain focused on the content. In any meeting, the facilitator must constantly balance process with content. Processes include the methods and tools used to help people interact productively with each other, including how decisions are made and making sure everyone has an equal voice. Content focuses on topics or subjects under discussion at any meeting. Determining the tools and methods to use that create this balance is an important task the facilitator must perform. Time spent in thoughtful preparation goes far to assure a successful meeting.



## FACILITATOR PREPARATION AND PLANNING

### Preparation

If you have a chance to prepare before the meeting, take advantage of it! Preparation involves deciding what methods and tools to use/provide. The following questions will aid you in making this decision.



### Why

Why is the meeting being held? What tasks are planned? What is the overall goal of the meeting? Is this meeting only a part of a larger goal? Has this been written down?

### Who

Who is invited? If decisions need to be made, are the right people going to be present? Who is not going to be there? How does attendance affect successful completion of tasks? Who cannot come? Who is not invited? Why?

### When

When is the meeting scheduled? How long should it be? Is there enough time? If it is close to lunch or dinner, should it be catered?

How much time can be allotted for each agenda item?

### **Where**

Where is the meeting to be held? Do you and the participants need directions, suggested lodging, and airline recommendations? Are there adequate resources (overheads, flip charts, white boards) available? How is the room arranged? Is the room appropriate for the task? You might decide it would be better to have the meeting outside on the lawn!

### **What**

Consider possible group dynamics. Do the participants know each other? How well? What is the history of the participants? How long have they been meeting? Have they had specific problems working together in the past? What are potential problems with this meeting? Can they be mitigated or eliminated before the meeting begins?

### **Planning**

Once information is gathered about the meeting, the facilitator can start planning. During the planning stage, the facilitator needs to decide which tool or technique to use where. For example, while using a voting system for decision-making is fast and efficient, it may leave too many people dissatisfied

with the result. Therefore, more discussion or consensus building may be called for. There are a few tools that need to be reviewed and developed during planning. These include charters, meeting agendas, and ground rules.

### **Charters**

For a team, the charter is the document that defines why the team exists and its overall goal(s). However, even if the meeting does not involve a team, the basic elements of a charter are important because they define the purpose of the meeting. It is used to ensure that the participants understand who is sponsoring the meeting, and that they clearly understand the focus of the time they will spend together. If a charter already exists, the facilitator needs to review it before the meeting. If a charter does not exist (because the meeting does not involve a team) the facilitator should discuss this item with the leader before the meeting and develop a purpose statement for the meeting. Typical items included in a charter or purpose statement include the participants, the sponsor, a description of the goal, and a due date (if applicable).

**See the Example Charter/Purpose Statement Form Below. Blank Forms Are Included in the Attachments Section of the Primer.**

**Example: CHARTER/PURPOSE STATEMENT FORM**

|   |
|---|
| <b>Name:</b> <i>Training self-enrollment process.</i>   |
| <b>Members/Participants:</b> <i>R. Patterson, Operations, P. Smyth, Client Services, T. Gordon, Employee Development, J. Freeman, Steward, C. Greig, Operations J. Vakil, Quality Advisor, S. Beaudry, IT</i>   |
| <b>Sponsor:</b> <i>Evelyn Green; VP Employee Development</i>  |
| <b>Outcome and Deliverable:</b> <i>The “training self-enrollment process team” is mandated to develop a self-serve enrollment process for employees in the Client Services and Operations departments.</i>  |
| <b>Deliverable Due Date:</b> November 30, 2002  |
| <b>Tasks and Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Develop the process steps and sub-process elements.</i></li> <li>- <i>Define the user community needs.</i></li> <li>- <i>Ensure the process supports the manager-employee development planning process and tools.</i></li> <li>- <i>Area of focus is Operations and Client Services departments, process should be scalable to other departments.</i></li> <li>- <i>Existing IT systems are to be utilized, enhancements under 3 man-months are within scope.</i></li> <li>- <i>Delivery of training &amp; communication to the stakeholder groups.</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Ground Rules:</b> <i>1.) Participants are expected to attend all meetings, 2.) Meeting roles will rotate among team members, 3.) All ideas will be considered, 4.) Decision-making process is consensus, 5.) Participants are expected to complete action items and assignments on time, 6.) A group list-serve will be set-up for team documents.</i>   |

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**Meeting Agendas**

The meeting agenda is the document that defines what will be done at any particular meeting. It should include the date, time, and location of the meeting, the objective of the meeting, and the list

of tasks to be addressed. In addition, it is a good practice to allot times for each task (or agenda item) to help assure that the meeting will end on time. If the agenda has not been prepared and distributed, the facilitator should get the pertinent information to the attendees to ensure that the necessary people attend and that they come prepared. The facilitator uses the agenda prior to the meeting to determine specific processes to be used, and during the meeting to keep discussions on track. In addition, meeting agendas help participants know what to expect and how to prepare for the meeting.

**See the Example Agenda Form Below. Blank Forms Are Included in the Attachments Section of the Primer.**

Example MEETING AGENDA FORM

|  |                 |   |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <b>Meeting Objective:</b> <i>Create the team’s communication plan for the new training enrollment process.</i> |                 |   |
| <b>Meeting Location:</b> <i>4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room B</i>   |                 |   |
| <b>Date:</b> <i>Tues, April 16</i>   |                 |   |
| <b>Time:</b> <i>9:00am – 12:00</i>   |                 |   |
| <b>Attendees:</b> <i>R. Patterson, P. Smyth, T. Gordon, J. Freeman, C. Greig, J. Vakil</i>                     |                 |   |
| <b>Tasks &amp; Activities</b>  | <b>Duration</b> | <b>Expected Outcome</b>   |
| <i>Warm-up &amp; Review Agenda</i>   | <i>10 min</i>   | <i>Team readiness</i>   |
| <i>1. Share interview information</i>  | <i>40 min</i>   | <i>Shared understanding of different Stakeholder views and concerns about the training enrollment initiative.</i> |

|  |        |   |
|--|--------|---|
| 2. SWOT Analysis & Stakeholder needs assessment.   | 30 min | Completed audience map of communication requirements.                               |
| 3. Develop key messages and & guidelines for the communication plan  | 45 min | Decision on critical goals of the communication plan.                               |
| 4. Action Planning   | 30 min | Determine action items, and timeframes for the communication plan.                  |
| 5. Checkpoint  | 15 min | Validated communication plan.   |
| Plan Next Meeting<br>Critique Meeting  | 10 min | Decide purpose and date for next meeting. Team evaluation of meeting effectiveness. |
| <b>Meeting Preparation:</b> Facilitator role: Ron; Note Taker role: Clare  |        |   |
| <b>Items/Information to Bring to the Meeting:</b> Notes from April 4 <sup>th</sup> meeting – brainstormed ideas. Completed interview data. |        |   |

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## Ground Rules

Ground rules help meeting participants establish appropriate ways to interact with each other during the meeting. If the meeting involves a team, they will probably already have established ground rules. If the participants have never met or only meet occasionally, they may not have developed ground rules. If this is the case, be prepared to develop them at the beginning of the



meeting. The rules do not have to be extensive. They may be as simple as “treat each other with respect” or “everyone has an equal voice.” Another important aspect of the ground rules is making sure that participants understand how decisions are to be made. It may be necessary to discuss the options with the team if they do not already have a decision-making norm. Options may include multi-voting, majority rule, consensus, or a combination of two different methods.

A final note: not every meeting has or needs charters, agendas, or ground rules. And sometimes they are combined together, such as when a meeting only occurs once a year and the agenda and overall task are the same. Even after these tools are developed in some form, participants may still be confused about why they are at the meeting and how they are expected to behave. Don't expect to please everyone. Understand your role as facilitator and

### Common Ground Rules:

- Attend all meetings and be on time.
- Listen to and show respect for the opinions of others
- Follow the agenda - stay on track
- The only stupid question is the one that isn't asked
- Ensure that credit is given to those to whom it is due
- No disruptive side-conversations
- Cell phones and pagers off



do all you can to assist within that role, but remember, you can't be all things to all people. Preparation and meeting plans can help avoid most meeting pitfalls, but you cannot possibly anticipate every need, dynamic, and nuance of human interaction. The real job of facilitation begins once the meeting starts. It's the facilitator's ability to recognize problems and respond appropriately that becomes important.

## FOCUSING THE MEETING

As important as it is for the facilitator to properly prepare for the meeting, it is equally important that the participants be focused. This requires making sure that all attendees are informed of the purpose of the meeting and that they come prepared to participate.

A meeting without focus will usually be unproductive, and may result in conflict. Since the facilitator's role is to help ensure successful, productive meetings, purposeful direction is necessary. To focus the meeting effectively, the facilitator needs to be concerned with both elements of conducting meetings mentioned previously - the content and the process.



Making sure participants understand the meeting agenda and ground rules provides not only a basis for them to stay focused on the task and the process but also provides a basis for facilitator intervention which helps the team stay on track. At the beginning of the meeting, the facilitator needs to review the meeting agenda and ground rules to ensure everyone understands, agrees to, and will abide by them.

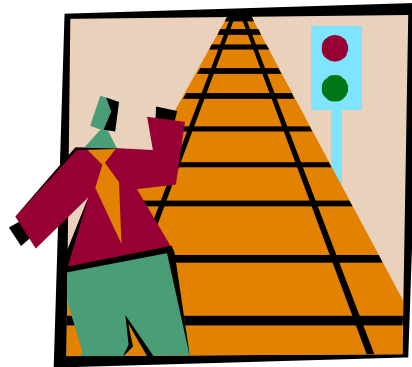
Specific items should be discussed:

- Review the charter with the participants, if it exists.
- If there is no charter, review the purpose and the expected outcome of the meeting.
- Review the ground rules to reinforce what the participants have already decided.
- Review the items for discussion and the time line.

If the ground rules do not exist, then you must assist the participants in developing them. A quick and easy way to develop a list of ground rules at the beginning of a meeting is to ask the participants, "When you attend meetings, what lights your fire and what burns you up?" You will sometimes get surprising responses, but don't try to force them into a common mold. Remember, each meeting has a unique character that you have to work with and respect.

## KEEPING THE MEETING ON TRACK

Keeping the team on track starts with good preparation and includes the use of appropriate process intervention. Process intervention is an interruption by the facilitator of the meeting process and conversation in order to refocus the participants and/or to rebalance group interactions.



Most interventions can link back to the posted ground rules or group norms. As a guideline, always start with the lowest level of intervention, which is the least obvious and least threatening to the individual or group. As facilitator, your goal is to support the participants in achieving their desired outcomes by staying on track and balancing participation with results, so interventions must be supportive. Speak the intervention clearly using assertive language, with supportive tone of voice and body language.

The following are examples of the Five (5) most common situations requiring intervention to keep the

meeting on track, with example suggestions on how to intervene in each situation.

- **Side-Bar Conversations**
- **Staying on Time**
- **Never Ending Discussion**
- **Conflict (personal attacks)**
- **Returning from Breaks**

### **Process Intervention & Desired outcomes:**

- 1.) To keep the process on track and moving forward with all participants engaged, making best use of time and resources.
- 2.) Balance participation with the meeting results.




| Topic                         | Situation   | Intervention  |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Side Bar Conversations</b> | A member of the group is having side-bar conversations with other participants throughout Sam's presentation. | 1. A friendly reminder: "Just a reminder, we agreed to 'one conversation at a time' in our ground rules for today."   |
|                               |   | 2. Direct the reminder: Make eye contact (with Susan) and restate, "One conversation at a time please."   |
|                               |   | 3. Personalize it: "Susan do you have a clarification question for Sam?" or "Susan I can see that you have something to contribute; when Sam has finished we'll hear from you." |
|                               |   | 4. Make a direct request: "Susan, please hold your comments until Sam has finished."  |
|                               | If Susan is the only one interrupting or having side conversations.   | 5a. Talk to her at break, one-on-one.   |
|                               | If there are many people interrupting or having side conversations.   | 5b. Put the process on hold and ask the group "Do we need to take a break?"   |

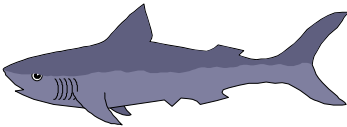
Note: If other participants are reacting to the material, suggest "parking the issue" while completing the current item(s). Address this/these new topics after the speaker or the agenda topic discussion ends.

See "Use of Parking Lot" - page '31'

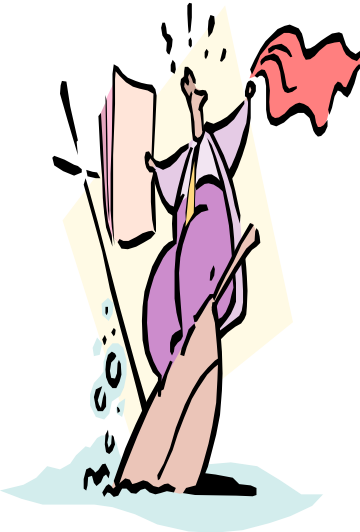
| Topic                  | Situation   | Intervention   |
|------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Staying on Time</b> | The group has a lot to cover in their agenda, but they seem to go down rabbit holes and may veer off into other topics. | 1. Invoke the "keep focused" ground rule: Suggest the use of a <i>Parking Lot</i> to capture items that need to be pursued, but are not the focal points for this meeting.   |
|                        |   | 2. Specifically re-focus on the particular topic/agenda item: "I'd just like to remind you that we are discussing item 4, team budget, please hold discussion on other topics until we get to them."   |
|                        | The discussion has continued for some time and you are running out of time for the item.                                | 3. Attempt closure of item: "Team, we have 10 minutes remaining for this item. We need to re-focus. What do we still need to discuss to conclude this item?"<br>"We are almost out of time for this item, there appears to be more discussion required is that true?"<br>Follow-up a yes response with, "What do you need in order to close on this item?" or "Why are we unable to close on this item?" |
|                        | The item is truly important and just wasn't given sufficient time for the necessary discussion and action.              | 4. Give participants a choice on how they spend their meeting time: "Is this item more important than the remaining items on the agenda and if so, when will you address the other items?" Note: The answer should <i>not</i> be to keep going until all the items are completed.  |

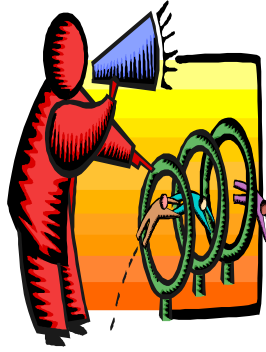
| Topic                                 | Situation   | Intervention   |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <p><b>Never-Ending Discussion</b></p> | <p><b>Information Barriers</b></p> <p>Sometimes a discussion will not come to closure, usually because of information that is insufficient, inaccurate, or unreliable. Sometimes a topic leads to significant emotional reactions.</p>  | <p>Follow the same guidelines under “Staying on Time” it may be that there is insufficient valid information to progress, in which case the team should park the item for another meeting. If the remainder of the meeting is dependant on the completion of this item, then re-schedule the meeting with action items to ensure that participants bring whatever is required next time.</p>                   |
|                                       | <p><b>Personal Agenda or “Hobby Horse”</b></p> <p>Whenever a topic comes up, an individual may begin to recount the same war stories, etc. You can often tell by reading the faces of the other participants (look for rolling eyes). The individual, often oblivious of the reactions of others, settles into the story.</p> | <p>1. Gentle interruption: Once you’ve determined that an individual is in a familiar story mode, and what’s being said does not appear to contribute to the item under discussion, gently interrupt him to ask, “Bob, excuse my interruption, but I’m not sure how this fits with our topic. Can you clarify for me?”</p>  |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>Never-Ending Discussion Cont’d</b></p> |   | <p>2. Direct the inquiry: Make eye contact with Bob and ask, “This sounds to me like familiar turf, is this a recurring theme?” Then make eye contact with the other participants. At this point Bob will usually ‘fess up’ that this is either a war-story that everyone has heard, or a favorite ‘complaint.’ Acknowledge him, ask what key piece of the discussion he would like captured, and then move on.</p> |
|  |   | <p>3. Personalize the request: “Bob we agreed that this item would remain parked (or off-topic), has anything changed its status?”</p>  |
|  | <p>It is unlikely that a person will continue raising the issue. In the event that he does.</p> | <p>4. Firmly restate the request: You can restate the intervention comments under either 2 or 3 and that should allow the group to continue forward without using up valuable time.</p>   |
|  | <p>In the rare case where the individual cannot let go.</p>                                     | <p>5. Talk to him privately at break: Give feedback (gently) about the effect his behavior is having on the group and the session. Ask for his help in keeping the session moving forward.</p>  |

| Topic                             | Situation   | Intervention  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Conflict: Personal Attacks</b> | <b>Individual Attacked</b><br>A group member takes “pot shots” at other team members. For the example, Bill is taking ‘shots’ at Joe. | 1. Apply gentle humor: If you don’t know this team or the individuals, observe Joe’s reaction and Bill’s demeanor and body language. Say nothing the first time unless you are sure that it was intentional, or make light of the first occurrence: “I hope that comment isn’t an indication that we need armor for this meeting.”  |
|                                   | Bill takes another shot   | 2. Restate the ground rules: Make eye contact with Bill and say, “Our ground rules clearly state that....We welcome all ideas, comments that build or clarify ideas etc., but not negativity.”  |
|                                   | Once again, Bill aims another sarcastic or belittling remark at Joe   | 3. Confront Bill directly: firm words, supportive tone and stance.<br>“Bill this is not the first time that you have targeted Joe with your remarks, please stop.” Then redirect him with “What is the concern you have with the issue/idea? How would you modify it to improve it?”<br> |

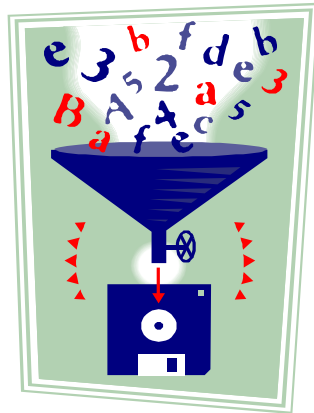
|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>Conflict: Personal Attacks Cont’d</b> | Bill persists with comments aimed at Joe                      | 4. Gentle, public reprimand: In a gentle tone say, “Bill despite my reminders, you continue to make critical comments towards Joe’s ideas. If there is a personal disagreement between the two of you, it is inappropriate to play it out here. Can you participate in this meeting productively or is there another issue which needs to be addressed before the team can continue?” (This gives Bill the opportunity to bow out of the meeting. If he chooses to leave, ask the team if they can continue without him)<br><br>The same intervention could be made one-on-one with Bill at break. |
|  | <b>Group Attacked</b><br>Bill is taking potshots at everyone. | 1. Apply gentle humor: If you don’t know this team or the individuals, observe their reactions and Bill’s demeanor and body language. Say nothing the first time unless you are sure that it was intentional, or make light of the first occurrence: “I hope that comment isn’t an indication that we need armor for this meeting.”  |
|  | Bill takes another shot                                       | 2. Restate the ground rules: Make eye contact with Bill and say, “Our ground rules clearly state that....We welcome all ideas, comments that build or clarify ideas etc., but not negativity.”   |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <p><b>Conflict: Personal Attacks Cont'd</b></p> | <p>Bill continues. At this point he has made several remarks to various group members and you have redirected his comments and reminded him of the ground rules.</p> | <p>3. Address problem directly: "Bill you have made several negative comments to group members. Is there something else going on that is interfering with your ability to participate here today?"<br/>Or throw it to the team. "Team, how do you feel when Bill makes this type of comment?"</p> |
|   |  | <p>4. Personal Confrontation: If the attacks continue and the group is reluctant to say anything to Bill when discussed as in 3 above, then speak to Bill at break as in Step 4 above.</p>                      |

| Topic                               | Situation  | Intervention   |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| <p><b>Returning From Breaks</b></p> | <p>Team members are late returning from breaks.</p>  | <p>1. Light reminder: "Remember, you agreed to return from breaks on time because it helps you finish on time, it's one of your ground rules." Just before the next break remind the team to be back on time, and advise them of when that is. You may want to lighten the tone by suggesting that you all synchronize your watches while whistling the tune to Mission Impossible.</p>  |
|                                     | <p>Team members are chronically late returning from breaks. If it is the same members each time then remind them when they return.</p>  | <p>2. Ask for input: "Out of curiosity, why do you have a ground rule that says return from breaks on time, and yet consistently several people are late returning from break each time? What do we need to do for this to work?" Facilitate a discussion around the ground rule and expectations – perhaps there aren't enough breaks, or they are too short, members may need some flexibility from time to time to accommodate other needs – build it into the schedule at the start of the meetings.</p> |

## MANAGING DATA

One of the keys to meeting success is managing the information that the participants are dealing with and producing. It is up to the facilitator to make sure that everyone hears, sees, and understands what is presented, what is offered, what is going on, what is agreed to, and that work products and decisions are accurately captured.



One way to do this is to keep a running memory. The running memory is a consciousness thread used to keep individuals focused and working on one thing in a logical sequence. Running memory is the documentation you post on the walls or otherwise collect where everyone can see it. It is where you keep all comments, ideas, discussion, agreements, thoughts, votes, and decisions, so each person can see "what we're talking about now."

Running memory can be kept on flip charts on an easel, butcher paper covering the walls, chalk or dry-erase boards, electronic documents projected on a screen, or shared materials using web-based virtual meeting tools. Each of these has advantages and disadvantages in terms of setup, handling, and the

amount of memory visible at one time, keeping pages in order, and transcription. Find the tool that works best for you, the participants and your environment. Then practice with the mechanics (posting flip charts, copying the dry-erase board, dealing with the technology of web-based tools) until the medium doesn't get in the way of your facilitation.

Some facilitators use a recorder or scribe to keep running memory (When used with an electronic tool, the recorder is sometimes called a *technographer*). This frees the facilitator to focus on group dynamics, traffic control, staying on topic, meeting process, honoring agreements about working together (ground rules/group norms), and other aspects of facilitation. Other facilitators prefer to have more control of what is recorded, and wield the marker (or keyboard) themselves. Recording the right things at the right level of detail, summarizing without changing essential words, and knowing when to check back with the speaker are all skills that require practice, and for some people, just don't fit with how they process information. Consider using a recorder, but make sure you know who it is and are comfortable working with them.

If you are not using an electronic medium for the running memory, you may wish to have a scribe capturing the information as you go. Scribing is an art form that is very similar to recording.

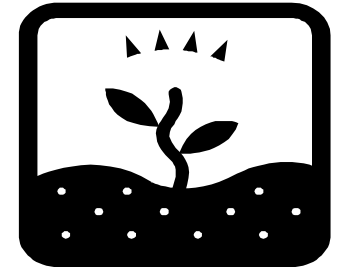
### Ten Basics of Managing Data

1. Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
2. Work on one issue at a time. Let the group choose and word the issue. Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
3. Agree on how to work on that issue. Tap the group wisdom for how to work before offering your own process. Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
4. When someone offers an idea, Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall. If they offer it repeatedly, point to where it is written down and hanging on the wall.
5. If someone attacks a person for a "dumb" idea, ask them where the idea is written down and hung on the wall. Move to it. Move the discussion to the idea, away from the person who offered it. If additions, qualifications, clarifications, or pros and cons are offered, Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
6. When the group is discussing, voting on, or coming to consensus around a solution, Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
7. When the group moves away from the agreed-to issue, go to where you wrote it down and hung it on the wall, call their attention to it, and give them the choice to change the issue, go back to the one they agreed to, show how this one affects the one they agree to, or put a time limit on the digression. Whatever they decide, Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
8. When the group moves away from the agreed-to process, go to where you wrote it down and hung it on the wall, call their attention to it, and give them the choice to change the process, go back to the one they agreed to, show how this one affects the one they agree to, or put a time limit on the digression. Whatever they decide, Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
9. When someone says, "We ought to \_\_\_\_\_," find out who will. Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall
10. Before breaking up, find out when the group will get back together. Write it Down and Hang It on the Wall

The same precautions about choosing a recorder apply to choosing a scribe. The facilitator may decide to scribe to control information flow and discussion.

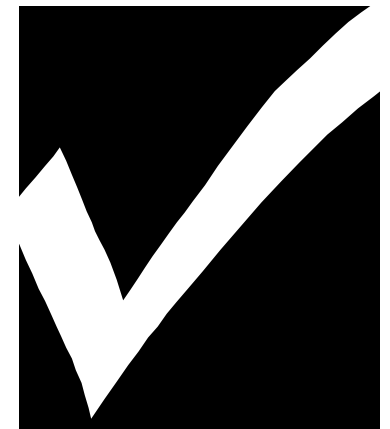
### KEEP LEARNING AND GROWING

Finally, it is important that as a facilitator you continue to learn and practice new techniques. Keep a generic meeting evaluation form (see example form in the Attachments section), and have participants fill it out anonymously. Review the responses, and incorporate specific suggestions. If you do not want to use a written meeting evaluation, then set aside a few minutes at the end of each meeting to ask the participants about what meeting processes worked, and what did not. Ask for suggestions to improve the meeting process for the next time.



Specific attributes of an effective facilitator include:

- **Openness**
- **Honesty and fairness**
- **Consistency in actions**
- **Focus**
- **Active listening**
- **Accessibility**
- **Flexibility**
- **Assertiveness**
- **Enthusiasm**



These attributes will be covered in more detail in subsequent primers.



## REFERENCES

We have included here a listing of additional reading and information resources to help you continue to learn more about Facilitation. The written reference materials listed vary from basic to full-blown instructional texts. The websites for the American Society for Quality, the Association for Quality and Participation, ASQ Human Development & Leadership Division, and the International Association of Facilitators are good sources for additional information and course listings. These websites also have areas to post questions for topic experts, and to discuss facilitation topics with others.



- 1.) *Facilitation at a Glance*, Ingrid Bens, M.Ed., Goal/QPC & AQP: Cincinnati, 1999
- 2.) *The Facilitator Excellence Handbook*, Fan Rees, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, 1998
- 3.) *The Facilitator's Field Book*, Thomas Justice and David W. Jamieson, AMACOM: New York, 1999
- 4.) *The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups*, R. Schwarz, Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, 1994
- 5.) *Intervention Skills: Process Consultation for Small Groups and Teams*, W.B. Reddy, Pfeiffer & Company, 1994
- 6.) *Facilitation: From Discussion to Decision*, A. L. Zimmerman and Carol J. Evans,

- 7.) *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making*, Same Kaner, New Society Publishers: Philadelphia, PA, 1996
- 8.) *The Complete Guide to Facilitation: Enabling Groups to Succeed*, Tom Justice and David Jamieson, HRD Press: Amherst, MA, 1998
- 9.) *The Art of the Focused Conversation: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace*, The Canadian Institute for Cultural Affairs: New Society Publishers, (ISBN 0-86571-416-9)
- 10.) *Facilitating With Ease: A Comprehensive Guide to the Practice of Facilitation*, Ingrid Bens, Participative Dynamics, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA

Also you can contact the following organizations for training courses and additional topic information:

**The International Association for Facilitation @  
<http://www.iaf-world.org> or 952.891.3541**

**The Association for Quality and Participation @  
<http://www.aqp.org> or 800.733.3310**

**The American Society for Quality @  
<http://www.asq.org> or 800.248.1946**

**The Human Development & Leadership Division @  
<http://www.asq-hdl.org>**

## ATTACHMENTS

### MEETING AGENDA FORM

|   |                  |                   |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Meeting Objective:  |                  |                   |
| Meeting Location:   | Date:            | Time:             |
| Attendees:  |                  |                   |
| Tasks and Activities:   | Time Allocation: | Expected Outcome: |
| Warm-up<br>Review Agenda<br><br>1.<br><br>2.<br><br>3.<br><br>4.<br><br>5.<br><br>Assign Actions<br>Plan Next Meeting<br>Critique Meeting |                  |                   |
| Meeting Preparation:  |                  |                   |
| Items/Information to Bring to the Meeting:  |                  |                   |

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## CHARTER/PURPOSE STATEMENT FORM

|  |
|--|
| Name: (optional)   |
| Members/Participants:<br><i>Who is involved on a regular basis?</i>  |
| Sponsor:<br><i>Who determined the members had to meet? Who is interested in the outcome?</i>   |
| Outcome and Deliverable:<br><i>What is the expected result of the meeting? What is the form of that result? A decision? A plan? Completed action?</i>    |
| Deliverable Due Date:  |
| Tasks and Activities:<br><i>What specific topics/issues need to be addressed? What information needs to be gathered? What decisions need to be made?</i> |
| Ground Rules:<br><i>How will participants treat each other during meetings? How will decisions be made?</i>  |

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## MEETING EVALUATION

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Survey Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Meeting, Workshop, or Training Received:

\_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Group/Department/Team:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In an effort to evaluate the meeting process and to continuously improve, we are asking you to please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Return the survey to the Facilitator. The information will only be reviewed by the Facilitator and will be used to determine the effectiveness of the meeting/training, the materials provided, and the overall participant experiences to determine what areas can be improved. Please verify that the information you completed above is correct for the Facilitator and Meeting. Rate each category below by marking your response in the appropriate box. Make any comments that you feel are appropriate for each category.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Facilitator/Trainer knowledge/ability:

◇ Excellent    ◇ Above Average    ◇ Average    ◇ Poor

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting materials, equipment, & tools:

◇ Excellent    ◇ Above Average    ◇ Average    ◇ Poor

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting length and pace:

◇ Excellent    ◇ Above Average    ◇ Average    ◇ Poor

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Overall meeting effectiveness:

◇ Excellent    ◇ Above Average    ◇ Average    ◇ Poor

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Meeting room:

◇ Excellent    ◇ Above Average    ◇ Average    ◇ Poor

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate the group's enthusiasm, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What would you change to improve the meeting's effectiveness, why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

