

Meeting Facilitation Techniques

Organized by four essential functions

- Provide Structure
- Encourage Participation
- Reflect the Group as a Whole
- Move the Group Forward

Provide structure

- Firm objectives, flexible agenda
 - Advance buy in to objectives
 - Objectives reviewed at start, posted throughout
- Develop and use agendas
 - Refer to handouts
 - Tips for meetings
 - Agenda template
 - Two Echo Meeting Card
- Call on people
 - Stacks
 - Round Robin
 - Talking Stick
 - Color Cards
- Say where we are
 - Weaving every few comments
 - Pause and say where we are
 - Advance notice about what's coming up next
- Stay on track
 - Have an agenda with times
 - Pause and point out the time
 - Do the math (divide time by tasks)
 - Have a basket or parking lot
- The problem or question always defined
 - Written on the wall
 - Regular reminders
- Deliberate proposal development
 - Handout – proposal development
 - Separate understanding from judgment



- Address disagreement
 - Three types of disagreements
 - Information
 - Values
 - Outside factors
 - Identify/name disagreement

- Manage conflict
 - Direct conflict toward self
 - Stand in between the adversaries
 - Meet people where they are at
 - Into the fire
 - Six step process
 - Pause
 - Stories
 - Feelings
 - Interests
 - Intentions
 - Action

- Handouts
 - Colors
 - Page numbers
 - Everybody has one
 - Teleconference accommodations

- Check for Alignment
 - Language
 - Tense
 - Group definitions and boundaries

- Co-facilitating
 - Define roles clearly in advance
 - Stick to roles
 - Confer and revise strategies during breaks
 - One person lead and one assisting
 - Support each other publicly

- Facilitating while participating
 - State your role and your views up front
 - Default position: facilitator
 - Let everyone know when you are switching roles and giving your opinion
 - Raise your hand and put yourself in the “line-up”
 - Make process decisions in the best interest of the group



Encourage participation

- Make a comfortable environment
 - People facing each other
 - Food
 - Windows
 - Greet as people enter
 - Everyone feels that the facilitator is on their side
- Level playing field
 - All views heard
 - Looking for the next idea from anywhere
 - Respect for all
- Help people get to know each other
 - Line-ups
 - Everyone who has ever
 - Truth and a lie
 - Four corners
 - Ball toss
 - Other games
- Call on the shy
 - Is there anyone who has not spoken
 - Written surveys
 - Anonymous suggestions
- Ground rules
 - Provide a draft
 - Make from scratch
 - Meeting Card
- Small group discussions
 - Agendas – see file - Western Maine example
 - Chart or regular paper
 - Roles
 - Facilitator
 - Scribe
 - Worksheets for individuals and tables
 - See file - Western Maine example
 - Reporter
 - Reports
 - Oral
 - Popcorn
 - Each in turn
 - Posters



- Discuss in pairs
 - Questions clear
 - Timing clear
 - Roles clear
 - What did you learn?

- Energizers / physical activity
 - Think before you act upon, while acting think thereon
 - Do a verb
 - Yes, lets
 - Flash light, flash flood, flash bulb
 - Cowboy

- Team Challenges / Experiential learning
 - What
 - Stepping Stones
 - Picture Story
 - Horizontal Pole
 - Tarp Flip
 - Keypad
 - Leaning Tower of Feetsa
 - How
 - Objective and rules
 - Do it
 - Debrief
 - What did we see happening?
 - Why was that happening?
 - How is that like real life?

- Silence / Dead air
 - Often this is good
 - Allows room for shy people to speak up
 - Allows time for someone to “muster up their courage”
 - Allows time for self-seeking
 - Don’ be too quick to break the silence – let it go on
 - Discourage other “talkative” people from breaking silence
 - “Let’s give a chance for anyone to speak who has not yet spoken”

- When concerns are not spoken
 - If you have the sense that people have concerns but are not speaking up:
 - Encourage people to come to you one-on-one during a break or between meetings
 - Collect information via anonymous survey



- Closing Comments/Evaluation
 - Reflections
 - Hopes, concerns, whatever
 - Yes, and....
 - Plus/Delta on the spot
 - Written evaluations
 - Follow up e-mail



Reflect the group as a whole

- Flipcharts
 - Good when you need to keep stuff up
 - Use alternate colors
 - Number them
 - Tape
 - Photograph them
- Computer/projector
 - Good for working on words – one screen at a time
 - Adjust font size
 - Bullets
- “Green Wall”
 - Good for brainstorming
 - Facilitator writes cards or people write cards
 - Good for organizing
 - Show Kieve Wavus – committees
 - Show NEFF - Organize into columns
 - Can also be done with Post-its or thumbtacks
 - Show Fractionation and Leominster
 - Photograph it
- Suggest themes/priorities
 - Let the conversation go, then, “Based on what I’ve heard you say……”
 - Draft privately on laptop or on flipchart
 - Here’s what I think you said – have I got it right?
- Fishbowl / Talk show
 - Pick a few people to represent perspectives
 - Have a facilitated conversation among a few in front of everyone
 - Then open the conversation to everyone
- Multi-vote
 - Sticky dots
 - Marker
 - Can put all votes on one (up to three)
 - Rarely to make a final decision
 - The purpose is to see what we should talk about



Move the group forward

- Address repeated and/or long winded comments
 - If a comment is clearly being repeated or if someone is going on and on essentially saying the same thing over again in different ways:
 - Validate the comment
 - Let them know that they have been heard and understood
 - Paraphrase back to them their main point (s)
 - State that you want to hear from others
 - It's not about shutting one person down, it's about making space for others to speak up
- Seize forward progress
 - Capitalize on segues forward
 - When someone suggests moving ahead, even inadvertently, do it
 - Have a next item!
 - When you get agreement, move on
 - The facilitator needs to be thinking ahead!
 - Staff agenda
- Invite and/or make proposals
 - Does anyone have a proposal
 - Based on what I've heard you say, how 'bout if we.....
- Capture agreements
 - Write the actual words
 - This helps move forward so we don't have to go back later
 - Pick up the marker and start writing
- Name leads
 - When tasks are identified, identify
 - Who
 - By when
 - Establish a committee
 - Name them
 - Name a convener
 - Name members
 - Jot a mandate
- Minutes and meeting reports
 - Written reports are a key part of meeting facilitation
 - Rough Notes right away
 - Formal reports
 - Provide organization – not just chronological
 - Circulate a draft to participants first – have I got it right?
 - Revise and finalize

