The Art of Facilitation

A facilitator assists/eases the way for a group of people to come to common understandings about purpose and intentions and keeps it moving towards its (not the facilitator's), agreed actions.

The facilitator focuses **on the process, the content, and the relationships**, and helps the group to do so too.



Managing the process

- Set the **context** to be inclusive, comfortable, purposeful, enjoyable, and engaging.
- Help the group to come to a **shared understanding** of the purpose of the event. What would a successful meeting/event achieve? How much time do you have?
- Offer appropriate **processes** for the purpose, No. of people, time set.
- Be prepared to adapt quickly as the group's needs emerge.
- Take an **appreciative inquiry** approach helping the group look for what is going right, remind the group that there is no one right way, that there is opportunity to create multiple positive possibilities. **'Focus on the bright spots'.**
- Use **visual aids**, diagrams, flow charts, sound, visuals photos, movies, demonstrations, and most importantly hands on activities where appropriate.
- Record ideas from contributors accurately to value their **unique** contributions- use their words! Value all present, and **encourage** all to participate.
- Listen and observe. Ask probing questions.
- Acknowledge and respond to **emotions**.
- Paraphrase and summarize to help draw out common understandings.
- Acknowledge points of difference, offer to help in crucial conversations in the group or outside of the group.
- Use humour.
- Have **a kit bag** of group techniques to assist with process.
- Summarize key **agreements** and achievements. Help the group make **offers**, **requests and commitments** regarding future actions/mtgs, timelines, resourcing.
- **Share** highlights and successes of the process 'what are you grateful for', Thank and congratulate on the work and achievements. Celebrate! Evaluate.

Managing the facilitation process - STEP Out

TIME Time of year and day

Length of workshop Length of sessions Who is the target audience?

Childcare?

EVENTFULNESS

Breaks, attention expanders Refreshments Jokes, Music, Poems, Quotes Outside time? Demonstration

Hands on experience

PROCESSES

Set the scene for the workshop, build relationship

Welcome/introductions icebreaker exercise?

Outline workshop process

What do participants expect?

Process for workshop:

Summarise common purpose and key points the event will cover

As event proceeds check for group understanding – diagrams, photos, etc and agreement

Participants need to touch, smell, see the workshop process – doing it yourself provides the most powerful learning.

Requests made, commitments and offers given to secure follow up. Celebrate/evaluate.

SPACE

Seating, Lighting Temperature, Windows Access to outdoors Familiar/ Comfortable Easy to find Disability access Refreshments, Toilets Break out spaces

STEP Out

for effective events

OUTCOMES

Building relationships

Decisions progressing common purpose

Understanding of what's next

New skills, new friends

Evaluation

Celebrate - enjoy

Belbin's Team Roles

'What is needed is not well balanced individuals, but individuals who balance well with each other.'

Dr Meredith Belbin



Belbin suggests that understanding key team roles and your own strengths and weaknesses and managing them, can help create more balanced teams.

If team members have similar weakness this may be reflected in a whole of team weakness and inability to observe this tendency. If team members have similar strengths, they may tend to compete rather than cooperate for roles that match their natural styles rather than filling all roles.

Action Oriented Roles	Shaper	Challenges the team to improve.
	Implementer	Puts ideas into action.
	Completer Finisher	Ensures thorough, timely completion.
People Oriented Roles	Coordinator	Acts as a chairperson.
	Team Worker	Encourages cooperation.
	Resource Investigator	Explores outside opportunities.
Thought Oriented	Plant/Creative	Presents new ideas and approaches.
Roles	Monitor-Evaluator	Analyzes the options.
	Specialist	Provides specialized skills.
		www.mindtools.com

To find out which team roles you naturally fulfill, or to profile your team, visit **www.belbin.com**

Reference: Belbin M. (1993) Team Roles at Work; Butterworth/Heinemann