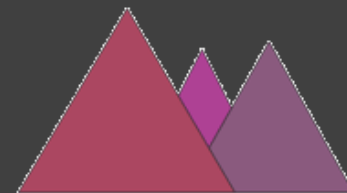


Building Successful
Organizations
Effective Meeting Facilitation

7th Annual Professional
Development Seminar
Charleston, West Virginia
July 30 & July 31, 2019



Development District
Association of Appalachia

The Science and The Art of Facilitation

Science is the technique
and the process

Art is the nuance

Together, they're the skill

The Five “Ps” of Facilitation

Prior

Preparation

Prevents

Poor

Performance

What Is Your Approach to Meeting Planning?

Your First Things First

Anxious Self- Questioning

How do I get a group to discuss, debate, and decide a lot of stuff in a short amount of time?

With a little part science and a little part art!!!

The What If's We All Ask



What if the pace is too fast, or too slow?



Is the agenda pitched at the right level?



How will the vibe in the room change if I “double-click” on an uncomfortable truth that surfaces?



Will I be able to get the inevitable strong personality in the room to button up and listen to their peers?

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?

First, understand your role as a meeting
facilitator



It's not about you, so don't monologue,
instead, dialogue; listen more

Embrace the facilitator's role of
managing time, encouraging
participation, and asking
participatory questions.

Let the other people in the group be
the stars of the show.

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?

Create an interactive agenda; plan for maximum participation

Structure your agenda such that there are opportunities for different people to lead parts of the discussion

- This lets you sink into the background, observe the group, and focus on driving the group toward that outcome or decision

Send a meeting agenda out to all participants before the meeting so they can come prepared

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?

Establish your meeting's purpose; you need a clear end-point

- An objective to achieve, or a decision to make
- Make sure your agenda covers this so participants know why they're there, and (importantly) what it would take to finish the meeting early

It's worth reiterating the objective at the start of the meeting, too

Write it on the easel to serve as guardrails for the discussion

- If the conversation heads down a rabbit hole or veers off-course, you can get the group back on track by reminding them of the meeting's purpose

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?

1

Close your laptop and open your ears

- People are far more engaged in discussions when they're not firing off an email or checking Facebook

2

Take a hardline approach and ask for all laptops, tablets, and phones to be turned off

3

Don't start the meeting until everyone is tuned in and ready to contribute

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?



Make room for everyone to contribute



Sometimes there's a a strong personality with strong opinions who is highly respected by other people in the group



They can dominate the discussion (usually without intending to), or even disrupt it by advancing their own agenda

Tip: Give them a pen, and ask them to take charge of capturing ideas on the easel

Not only does this intrinsically task them with listening (i.e., creating space for others to speak), you also avoid the scenario where they sit in the back of the room trashing ideas that diverge from their own



If they're a strong detractor or feel particularly strongly about the session, you'll be glad you shared the agenda and purpose in advance and gathered their input before the meeting. Help them walk in ready to make a constructive contribution.

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?



Facilitate conversation through questions



Many meetings are essentially problem-solving workshops



As the meeting facilitator, it's not your job to have all the answers.

It is your job to lead the group to answers.

That means posing the right questions at the right time.

When done well, pointed questions will challenge assumptions that may be preventing the group from getting to that "ah-ha!" moment; the breakthrough.



Ask leading questions that guide the group to the answer (it's more meaningful if they arrive at that conclusion themselves).

The Right Questions Are Important!!!

Good questions are important to create participation and to create intellectual discourse

- Can you expand on that point?
- Is this conversation moving us in the direction we want?
- Your last point intrigues me, but it feels counterintuitive – in what context could you see that applying?
- How would you summarize that?
- What would that look like?
- How does that make you feel?
- Why?
- How would you measure success in that instance?

Asking the right questions requires you to bust out your active listening skills

Give the group space to burn through the ideas that come quickly, and pay attention to what they're saying so you know which questions can get them to think deeper

Stay out of the discussion until it stalls out or starts going in circles

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?



It is imperative to read the room and use the energy



Tune into the energy of the room and look for visual cues like body language.

Are people fidgeting in frustration? Do looks of discontent or disagreement abound?

These are signs you need to intervene. It's ok to gauge sentiment in the room by simply asking people straight-up: Is this resonating? Do we feel comfortable with the progress we're making?



Bringing focus to the group's emotional state helps you understand whether they're engaged or disconnected.



And if the group is disconnected, it's time for you to jump in and lead them down an alternate path.

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?



Create a place to park good ideas that may distract



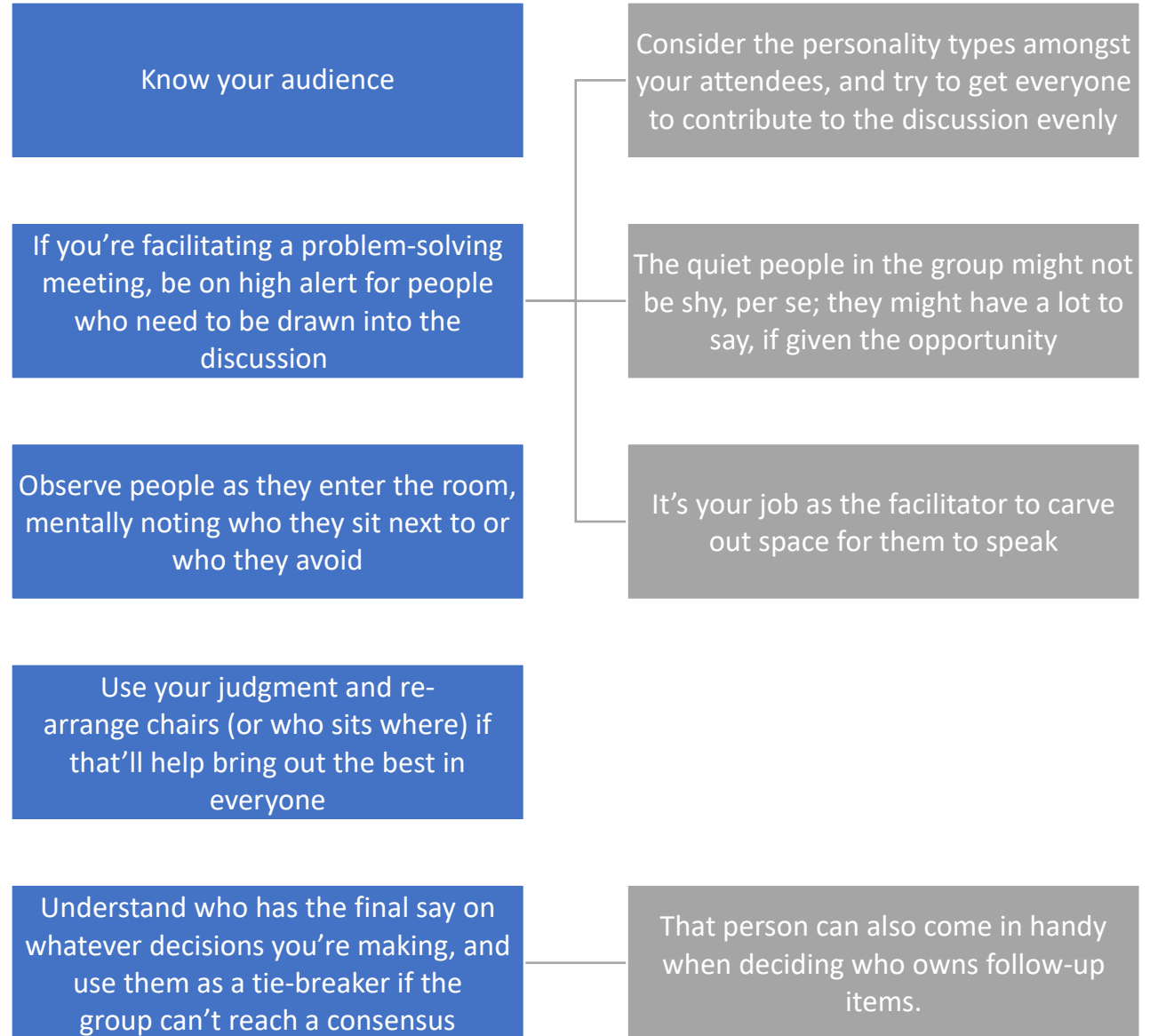
If an idea pops up that is valuable, but off-point, offer to create a “parking lot” and jot it down on an easel so you can come back to it later

Because right now is all about nailing your objective for this meeting



Knowing their thoughts aren't lost forever helps people return their focus to the outcome you're striving for

So, What Are The Right Elements To Facilitating A Great Meeting?



Final Tips



Stand up, congregate around the easel, and bring some dynamic energy to the room



Have people write their thoughts on sticky notes, then walk up to the front of the room and post them. Once everyone is done posting up ideas, take turns coming up front to present those ideas to the group.



Incidentally, when paired with coffee, an easel is easily the most innovative tool in the knowledge worker's tool kit

Summary



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