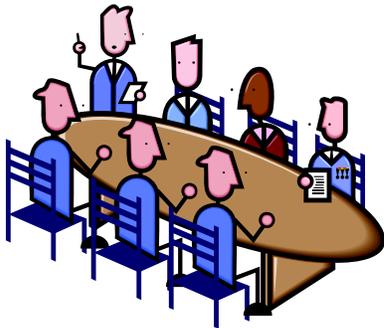


The Facilitator's Job Description

Great Meetings! How to Facilitate Like a Pro – Dee Kelsey and Pam Plumb

- Plans and designs the meeting process, in partnership with the client
- Helps everyone get acquainted and feel welcome
- Clarifies the purpose of the meeting, the desired outcomes, the process to be used and the roles of each person
- Works with the group to establish and get buy-in to the ground rules
- Draws out opinions and encourages full participation from all members
- Clarifies communication between people
- Helps keep the group focused and on track
- Protects participants from attack
- Provides a safe place for creative ideas
- Listens intently
- Handles difficult situations and behaviors
- Names conflict when it arise and guides those involved through a negotiation of their differences
- Adapts the process as necessary to help the group move forward
- Makes process suggestions
- Encourages the group with affirmation and appreciation
- Monitors meeting pace
- Summarizes progress of the meeting at key points
- Guides the group in coming to conclusions, agreements, clarity
- Maintains neutrality, reflecting content and process back to the group
- Serves the whole group rather than individuals, and the process over content





Tactics for Difficult People

Tactic	Works for	
	Excellent	Good
Arrange the room to minimize distractions. Have people enter and exit the room at the back, opposite the main presentation area.	Chronically tardy	
Start on Time. If you start late, you are rewarding late folks and penalizing those on time.	Chronically tardy	
Set ground rules. Let people know what you expect from them. Better yet, let the group participate in setting the ground rules. Remember, you need to stick to the ground rules.	Chronically tardy Domineering	Preoccupied Reluctant Don't want to be..
Offer small incentives. You can use small tokens the participant 'earn' for behaviors (participating appropriately, not taking over the conversation) then exchange at a prize table.		Domineering Don't want to be..
Use small group discussions and projects. You can also have the small groups generate questions.	Reluctant Don't want to be..	Domineering Nay sayer
Rotate small-group leadership. Give each participant an opportunity at leadership in the small-group.	Domineering	Reluctant Nay sayer
Position yourself near a participant. Move closer, position yourself behind or beside the person as you deliver material.		Domineering Don't want to be..
Initiate a private discussion. Ask for a one-on-one discussion with the difficult person. Your goal is to gain a better understanding of the person and what is driving his/her behavior.		Domineering Reluctant Nay sayer
Enlist the Participant's help. Ask the participant to help with a low-risk activity (distributing materials, posting charts, and so forth). This shows you trust and value the participant.	Reluctant Domineering	
Direct questioning. Ask a question directed to an individual (in the case of the Domineering – ask someone else). Use the individual's name; ask a question about the materials.		Domineering Don't want to be.. Nay sayer
Short and frequent breaks. Like stretch breaks to keep folks focused.		Domineering Reluctant

This is not an exhaustive list, but a few suggestions.



Simple Ground Rules to Consider

- No side conversations
- Share the floor
- One person speaks at a time
- No interruptions
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Debate ideas not individuals
- Attack the problem, not the person
- Use 'I' messages when giving opinions
- Level of confidentiality: complete confidentiality, no attributions
- No evaluation during brainstorming
- Stay on the subject
- Be constructive
- Begin and end on time – including breaks
- Arrive on time, stay to the end
- Consistent attendance from one meeting to the next
- Substitutes are (or are not acceptable)

Process

1. Ask for suggestions. All ideas are welcome.
2. Define the suggestion in terms of behavior. (What would it look like if....?)
3. Check with yourself to see if the rules really serve the group. If not, explain your concern to the group and offer an alternative.
4. Check for consensus on the ground rules.
5. Write it up on a flip chart.
6. After the group writes the ground rules, confirm that everyone can abide by them.

Definitions of selected techniques

Brainstorm: a process of generating a list of ideas about a topic. You may want to use the technique if you need to generate a list of problems or potential problems; causes of problems; topics; suggestions for what the ideal might look like; potential solutions and/or next steps. The idea is to get people to share what they are thinking about the topic and record the information. Remember that this process means that people express what comes to mind, none monitor or censor, or hold back. None evaluate ideas (own or others) while brainstorming. Use the time to generate ideas, not discuss ideas. It is ok to have repetition, it is ok to piggy back on another's idea (encourage it).

- Remind everyone of the rules each time you use this technique
- Set a time limit
- Record all ideas
- Helpful to get folks away from the table – perhaps move into a circle
- Support humor, laughter, creativity.
- Summarize ideas and check with the person to make sure you have understood correctly
- Be assertive in stopping judgmental comments.

SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis is used for analyzing the current situation. You may want to use this technique as part of a planning process. It is good to help a group see where they stand and what they may need to work on to get where it wants to go.

- Strengths – have the group members think about what they do very well and record those ideas.
- Weaknesses – what do they not do well, or wish they could improve. Again, record these ideas.
- Opportunities – these are external factors that could be possibilities. Generally, the group members have no control over these things, but they need to think about them to take advantage.
- Threats – negative possibilities waiting to ambush, storm clouds on the horizon
- All areas require openness and candor from group members.

What is/is not the Problem: method to define the problem and narrow the focus to the true problem issue. Useful when a group is having trouble sorting out what is the precise problem.

- Define the overall problem – what is presenting as the problem
- Make two lists, what is the problem and what isn't the problem
- Helpful to put two lists side by side

Example from 'Great Meetings!'

Problem: Lack of quality play equipment in neighborhood playground.

What Is The Problem	What Isn't The Problem
Lack of federal, state or municipal funds for purchase of equipment	The willingness of the city director of playgrounds to accept suggestions for improvement
Lack of city personnel to maintain the equipment	Local of families that use the playground
Low priority of this playground relative to other playgrounds in the city	Individuals in the neighborhood who are willing to give their time and energy to upgrade the park

Visualization: a technique to help participants paint a picture in their minds. Useful to get group members to identify what they would like to see in the future – for example they need to describe an automated system to handle part of a job they are doing. It is helpful for people to 'see' the details and that helps them articulate the way they want things to be.

- Create a scene for the group by leading them through a visualization exercise where they have the ability to see from some imaginary vantage point.
- Ask participants to consider facets of the organization's future.
- Ask participants to notice what they see, hear and feel. Give them a minute to make notes.
- Compare notes to see where there is agreement through discussion.
- Works best with small groups, so you may need to do comparison in small groups then come back to the larger group.
- Example from 'Great Meetings!': Ask participants to close their eyes and imagine with you. "It is now the year 2009 and your organization is functioning beautifully, just the way you would like it to be. You have special powers to view your organization. You can fly to any height and can see the town or whole state at a glance. You also have x-ray vision and enhanced hearing. What do you see, hear and feel? Whom is the organization serving? What is the structure of the organization? What kind of facilities is it operating in? What is the tenor of the conversation around the water cooler?" You can highlight whatever is important for the group to focus on.