

Eight Tips for Effective Facilitation

taken from teambuildingtips.com

If you are a manager, leader, consultant or trainer, chances are that you will need to facilitate meetings, events or workshops from time to time. So what are eight tips for effective facilitation?

Get clear on the goals

All participants need to be clear on the goals or outcomes that they are trying to achieve as a result of the facilitated session. Make sure that these are discussed fully and agreed.

Set ground rules

Facilitated sessions can be demanding and challenging and it is easy for things to get out of hand. Agree a set of ground rules with the group and make sure that they are prominently displayed so that they can be used a reference point in the event of disputes.

Keep focus

In a facilitated session, it is easy to drift off the point or go off on tangents. Keep the focus on the goals or outcomes to make sure the session stays on track.

Don't allow one person to dominate

This can be a particular challenge where people are more senior and seek to use their position to dominate proceedings. As the facilitator you need to take control and deal with in a way that does not undermine the individual.

Involve the quiet participants

Look for ways of involving those who are less vocal as they often have valuable contributions to make that they just need a little encouragement to voice them. Simply asking what's your take on that Jim? can be a way to get involvement.

Actively listening

When facilitating make sure that you are listening not just to what is being said but how it is being said. You also need to pay attention to the non verbal signs like the overall energy level or atmosphere in the room.

Stay neutral

Your job is to facilitate the discussion, bring out the ideas and capture them. You are not part of the group or team and you need to stay neutral. This means keeping your own views out of the session and not taking sides.

Summarize periodically

Facilitated sessions move at pace. A lot will be going on so it is useful to summarize periodically. This will help to keep the group focused, on track and provide foundations to build on success.