



WHAT MAKES A GREAT FACILITATOR?

Whether you are running an internal meeting or an external workshop it is important that you lead the session successfully. To be a good facilitator you need to:

Be open to new ideas.

Regardless of the content, regardless of if the ideas are right or wrong, be open to hearing them and letting people contribute.

Have an unbiased perspective.

Does not start with preconceived ideas about the end outcome or drive the discussion in a certain direction. You may have a goal you are trying to achieve but you should not try to guess what the outcome will be.

Be process-orientated.

Focus on how people reach the goals within a structured, time-limited session. The art of facilitation is knowing when to bring a discussion to a close when to change the topic when to cut off someone who has talked too long, when to let the discussion run over the allotted time, and when to let the silence continue a little longer.

Be respectful and encourage diversity in thinking.

You have to create and maintain an atmosphere of trust and respect. Sensing how people are feeling and understanding how to respond to a particular situation is a critical skill of facilitation.

Be a great listener.

A good facilitator practices “reflective listening” whereby he or she may repeat, sum up or respond directly to what a speaker said to ensure the speaker’s meaning was correctly understood by the group.

Be resourceful and creative.

Each group is as different as the individuals involved. Despite a well-planned agenda, sometimes the discussions do not unfold as expected. A good facilitator is able to think on his or her feet.

Be Tactful.

Sometimes the facilitator must take uncomfortable actions or say awkward things for the good of the group. The ability to do so carefully and diplomatically is critical.

Demonstrate sensitivity to the feelings of the group.

A great facilitator can read the room. Perceiving and responding to the group’s dynamic is essential to skilful facilitation.

Not sure you can do it yourself? [Contact Elm Communications](#) we have trained, experienced facilitators ready to help.