

YOUTH POWER!

Facilitation Tips and Procedures

Facilitation can be a difficult job. Below are some tips on how to put together a workgroup or committee, prepare for the meeting or teleconference, basic rules you should follow, facilitation tips, and over all group responsibilities and conduct.

Preparation:

To put together a group you will need to do the following things:

1. Identify the purpose of the group. Know the task of the group ahead of time. Once a group facilitator/leader has been established, assign a timeline for the group to begin meeting by.
2. Identify group members- find out who wants to be on the workgroup. You have either reached out to people you think would like to participate or others have volunteered to participate. You could also put out an announcement asking for participation from others in the network, your group or community. Once you have done that:
 - a. Establish who the people are, their names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mails as well as the best way to contact them.
 - b. Using the timeline for the workgroup, send out an e-mail, or mailing with suggested dates and times for a call or a face-to-face meeting based on the group leader's/facilitator's availability. Make sure to include a deadline of when you need an answer by. It should be no more than two weeks, sometimes less depending on the urgency of the work that needs to be done.
 - c. Call all group members to make sure they received the mailing and confirm their availability.
 - d. Prepare an agenda for the meeting. The agenda items should include a minimum of:
 - i. Time and date of meeting
 - ii. Location/ Call-In information for teleconferences
 - iii. Prioritize what areas of work need to be covered during the time you have based on project timelines.
 - iv. Next steps
 - v. Try to have time slots for agenda items
 - e. Once a date and time has been established, send out another e-mail and/or mailing to the group notifying them of the official date and time of meeting along with the Agenda for the meeting.

Group Facilitation

Facilitation (*definition*): To make something easy or easier to do. Used in the context of groups (*to facilitate the group.*) The term is many times wrongfully used or mistaken to mean govern or control.

Facilitator (*definition*): The person that facilitates a group or meeting (see above for facilitation.)

This person is many times mistaken as the person that “runs” the group, their job is not to “run” or “control” the group or what it does. The job of facilitator is really to keep the meeting going well, to remind the group of their rules, make sure everyone gets a chance to speak, and keep the group doing what they are supposed to be doing. The important thing is that the person facilitating should respond to the group and know what it needs, keep track of meeting time and date, be honest and listen to the group, and depend on members of the group for help and say in all decision making.

The group facilitator should be ready to do the following:

1. Make sure everyone that has said they will participate in the meeting has a copy of the agenda and the call-in information if necessary.
2. Call the meeting to begin, have everyone introduce themselves, and go over the agenda for the meeting.
3. Ask other group members to volunteer to take notes.
 - a. Notes should include who was in attendance at the meeting and who was absent, what time the meeting began, what the topic of the discussion was, what decisions were made by the group, what the next steps are for the group, what date and time was decided for the next meeting, and what time the meeting ended.
4. Keep the group on task and manage the time of the meeting.
 - a. Make sure to know what items on the agenda are the most important priorities that need to be addressed at that meeting.
 - b. Make sure enough time is given to these items. If it takes more time than planned, be sure to pick items from the agenda that can wait for the next meeting if needed.
 - c. Try to keep everyone focused on the task at hand. That may mean re-directing people speaking if they have gone off the topic and need to bring it back to the agenda items.
 - d. It is ok to politely interrupt group members and remind them of the time and that the group needs to get back to the agenda.
 - e. Try to establish a talk list. This means that you ask who has comments and you keep track of who was due next to speak. This way can ensure full group members’ participation and avoid issues of people feeling unheard.
 - f. Keep the conversations going by asking open ended questions about the topic of discussion.
 - g. Make sure to listen to what the members are saying, ask clarifying questions if needed, and try to make sure that other members understand what is going on.
5. Make note of any items that were discussed that the group decided on and needs the Board approval or vote.
6. Plan the next meeting’s agenda with the group based on the tasks that still need to be done.
7. Establish a regular meeting time or the date and time of the next meeting.

- a. Even though it isn't possible sometimes, it is best to have a regular meeting date and time whenever possible such as the 3rd Monday of the month from 4-5pm, as an example.
 - b. Go over the decisions made that day by the group and make sure that the notes/minutes reflect what tasks group members have agreed to take on and go over that as well.
8. After the meeting is over, follow-up with the person that took notes and make sure you have those notes/minutes.
 9. Try to send out the established agenda, next meeting's announcement, and the notes from the last meeting about a week before the next meeting so that group members have a chance to be reminded of the meeting and to read the notes.
 10. Follow up with group members that agreed to take on tasks to see what they have accomplished and if they need help.
 11. Report back to the Board from notes/minutes what work the group is doing, what has been done, and what is still needed. Group leader/facilitator also presents to the Board items from your group that need a vote.

Casting a vote: Every committee and/or Board has a process to make decisions on items discussed, an official group decision.

There are a few ways to do that:

Group Consensus- this process means that the group discusses the issue together and comes up with the decision collectively, or the majority agrees with the decision. This process is a good one because it allows for every member to have a say and discuss their concerns or view, and a decision is made by everyone.

Majority rules- this process means that a vote is called on an item and the majority vote of Yes or No makes the final decision. These are the steps:

- a. A group member presents an item that requires approval.
- b. Time is given for Board members to discuss the proposal.
- c. Once the discussion has finished, any member of the group can call for a vote by saying "I call for a vote"
- d. That call needs someone else to second it before it can be voted on. That person would agree by saying "I second that" This means that two people have to say that the item should be voted on before an official vote can be made. **The note taker should make sure they list who "motioned" for the vote and who seconded it"**
- e. When voting, the group facilitator should count the votes for 'Aye' and 'Nay' as well as the recorder to make sure there is an accurate count.
- f. The group leader/facilitator now is officially able to establish the vote by saying "all in favor, say 'Aye'" then they wait to hear the 'Aye's, those are counted. **The note taker should make sure they list how many people were in favor.**

- g. Then they say “all opposed?” this is the opportunity to say “Nay” or “no” those votes are counted. This is also an additional opportunity for members that object to the decision being voted on, to express their concerns and view point once again before the final vote is made. At this time, a re-vote can be cast if the group decides they want to reconsider the wording or action they were voting on. **The note taker should make sure they list how many people were opposed.**
- h. The last question asked is “any abstentions?” this is an opportunity for any group members that feel they do not want to be part of the decision made to officially document that they object and will not vote or are unable to vote on the issue because it is a conflict of interest. **The note taker should note the names of the people who abstain.**
 - i. A conflict of interest is when, what is being voted on would have a direct financial, moral or ethical influence on the person and their work.
- i. Then, based on the majority of people who said ‘Aye’ or ‘Nay’ an official decision will be recorded in the minutes and that is now the collective stance of the group or Board.

Group members’ responsibilities and guidelines

1. Be respectful of everyone in the group
2. Respect the facilitator and the role of the facilitator no matter who is leading the group. They are there to make sure the meeting runs smoothly and that the items on the agenda are being addressed as well as to facilitate the conversation.
3. It is not acceptable to be rude or disrespectful to any member of the group.
4. Make sure everyone has a chance to speak.
5. Don’t talk over other people.
6. Allow others to finish their thoughts. Ask them if they are done if you are not sure.
7. Validate people’s opinion even if you disagree.
8. Don’t put people down or call them names.
9. If you agree to take on a task, make sure to complete the task.
10. If you are unable to complete a task make sure to notify the group leader so that they can find someone else to do it.
11. Ask for help if you need assistance completing a task. You can ask the group leader to help you.
12. Each group member is equally responsible for upholding the group rules and for completing the work of the group.

13. DO NOT wait until the last moment to notify the group leader if you can no longer participate in the meeting. Make sure you let them know as soon as possible.

Teleconference Rules

A teleconference meeting has the same social rules as any other meeting; however, because people aren't able to see each other, only hear each other, there are a few things that people need to be aware of that will make the meeting go more smoothly. When participating in a teleconference, it is important to remember the following:

1. State your name every time you are about to speak. Remember that people can't see you so they don't know who you are. This is especially important if the group has a deaf member that requires an interpreter.
2. You should keep your phone on mute until such a time as you have something to say. This is especially necessary if you are in a noisy area. It is a courtesy to fellow group members who can't hear each other over a lot of noise.
 - a. Mute options:
 - i. If you have a cell phone most likely you have the option to press 'mute' on your phone and your voice and back ground noise will not be heard. If you phone does not have mute, there is often a mute feature on the conference call lines. Ask the moderator for the code. (example is *6)
3. Get the group leader's attention if you need to speak and are not able to get into the conversation. Since group members cannot see you, sometimes it's hard to let the group know you are trying to say something or the conversation has gotten heavy and they can't hear you. When this happens your best bet is to call the name of the facilitator and get their attention and say you want to say something. Most likely the facilitator is paying attention to people on the call.

Remember, we are a movement and we must do our best to empower all of our members and make sure we all contribute to the cause.

Lead on!