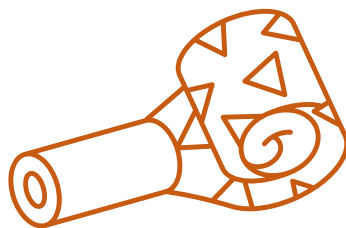




Results Based Facilitation Party Favors

Let's learn some strategies and tips that will help you facilitate results-based meetings!

Each page of this packet reviews a different strategy or tip. Our recommendation is to pick one or two that you want to start practicing rather than trying to tackle them all. As you grow as a facilitator, you'll be able to integrate more and more of these methods into your practice.





Listening

Participants won't bother engaging in the conversation if nobody is listening to them. Why bother? So you need to demonstrate that you are listening and set the expectation that participants should be listening to one another.

Key Strategies

I hear you say...
Did I get that right?

Reframe what was said to show participants you were listening and to make sure you understood them correctly

Ask participants to elaborate on what they said to help them dive deeper into the topic or to better understand why they said what they did

Tell me more
about...

1, 2, 3...

Give participants time to process information and think about their answer. After you ask a question, count to a specific number in your head (such as 8 or 10) before you speak. The silence will give participants time to process.

Notice when participants are particularly engaged in a topic and, when possible, give the group the option to continue the conversation beyond the time allotted in the agenda or move on to the next topic.

I'm hearing you all have
a lot to say about this
topic...

Set Norms

Set expectations for listening at the beginning of the meeting. You may want to consider expectations such as:

- Step up (for quieter people) and step back (for talkative people)
- Don't talk over others



Interrupting

We're often trained that interrupting is rude, but sometimes it's necessary as a facilitator. You need to be able to interrupt so you can keep the meeting on track and move toward the intended results.

At the beginning of the meeting

Inform participants at the beginning of the meeting that you might interrupt them and explain why you might interrupt them.

Stating this at the beginning:

- Helps facilitators who struggle with interrupting because it gives them permission to interrupt
- Makes participants aware so they know what to expect

I want to be sensitive to time, so I might interrupt you to keep us on track.

Throughout the meeting

That was a perfect example of brevity!

Identify when someone has successfully responded briefly.

Recognize when someone has brought up an important topic and explain that you'll return to that topic. Be specific - will you return to it later in that meeting or at a later date?

We're going to jot that down and talk about it later. For now, we'll focus on...

If participants are discussing a topic that is only relevant to a small group, you can also ask them to have that conversation at another time and come back to the group with the result.

Time Management

When you schedule a meeting, you pick a start and an end time. Participants come into the meeting expecting to begin work at the start time and leave at the end time. You'll build trust with participants if you respect those boundaries.

Time management is one of the hardest components of meeting facilitation, especially if you have a group of people who are passionate about the work but busy. As difficult as it is, managing time will pay off in the end.

Tips and Tricks



Plan Time Reasonably

When you're planning the agenda, make sure you're thinking about time reasonably. If your agenda is unrealistic, it'll be difficult to stay on time. You may want to review your agenda with a colleague to see whether they think you've accounted for time reasonably.

Consider who's in the Room

If you know the participants, consider who will be in the room. Are they talkers? Or are they a quieter group? This knowledge will help you determine how much time you devote to conversations.



Honor Participants' Time

People's time is valuable, so we should respect it. Honor participants' contributions by starting and ending on time. If you're running out of time, let the group decide whether they want to add time to the meeting to continue the discussion or end the meeting on time.

Assess your Contributions

Facilitators often want to make a lot of contributions to the conversation. You may even feel pressured to contribute. You need to judge whether a contribution you want to make adds value to the conversation or whether it's more important to stick to the agenda and stay on track.





Giving Back the Work

As a facilitator, your goal is to remain neutral and allow the participants to do the work. You'll likely be tempted to jump in, offer suggestions, and solve problems. It takes a lot of practice to hold yourself back and give participants the opportunity to do the work. But giving the work back to participants will empower them and allow them to develop solutions that are unique to their problems and groups.

Tips and Tricks

Let the Group take the Action Commitments

Facilitators often feel pressured to take on action commitments, but leave those tasks to the participants. Allow them to take ownership of the work, rather than taking on all the work yourself. This doesn't mean you can't ever take on an action commitment. But think critically about when it makes sense for you to take on that work.



If you hear participants suggesting action commitments but not taking ownership of those tasks, try saying:

[Participant's name], I hear you making an action commitment to... Is that correct?



Assume Participants are NCRW

NCRW stands for naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. Believe that the participants gathered have the solutions in the room to move forward. Trust them to do the work. Your job is to provide support, not solutions. It's their work, not the facilitator's work.

Turn Questions Around

When participants ask you a question about the work, turn the question around and ask the group the same question.

For example:

Participant: What would it be like if we did X?

Facilitator: What do you all think it would be like if we did X?





Check-ins

Are participants coming into the conversation excited and ready to work? Or is everyone exhausted and stressed? Are they feeling good about the topic being discussed? Or are they anxious about some particular detail of that topic?

Every RBF meeting should start with check-in questions that help gather data about the people in the room. That information will help you better respond to the room while facilitating the meeting.

Person Check-in

Check-ins should include a question about how participants are doing in person. Responses will help you assess people's mindset and mood entering the meeting.

As a facilitator, model how to answer this question honestly, rather than how you think you should answer it. Be honest and answer openly, rather than simply saying, "I'm good."

How are you?

What's making
you smile
today?

What's top of
mind for you?

What are you
holding about
[meeting
topic]?

What do you hope
to take away from
today's meeting?

Role Check-in

Check-ins should also include a question about how participants are doing in role. Responses will help you assess what feels most important to participants in their role.

Tips

- Include introductions if meeting participants don't already know one another. Introduction might include:
 - Name
 - Role
 - Organization
- Do individual share-outs with small groups and table share-outs with larger groups
- Chart check-ins so everyone can get a sense of the whole room



Documenting

If we don't have notes from a meeting, did it even happen?

Most of us have so many meetings and tasks on our plate, we won't remember much (if anything) about a meeting if we don't have notes.

That's why documenting is so important!

Front of Room

Charting - During some conversations (such as check-ins, brainstorm, and group share-outs), a facilitator or documenter should take notes on the board, a flip chart, or a presentation slide

- Ensure everyone can see the notes
- Summarize people's comments; don't write every detail

Back of Room

Meeting Notes - If the goal of the conversation is to brainstorm, gather data, make a decision, or plan next steps, a documenter should also take meeting notes

- Include more detail than when charting but still only capture major themes and action commitments, not every detail
- Share these notes with all meeting organizers and, depending on the meeting goals, with participants in a full or summarized form

After the Meeting

Storage - Meeting documentation is only useful if people have access and can review the notes.

- Store notes in an agreed-upon location everyone can access (physical or online)
- Take pictures of any flip charts



Neutral Facilitation

A neutral facilitator helps the group move from talk to action so they can achieve the identified results. The facilitator's work is to provide the group with tools, mental models, and frameworks that will help them do their work and achieve their results. The neutral facilitator creates a space where participants can guide their own work, answer their own questions, make their own decisions, rather than pursuing a personal agenda.

Key Strategies



At the beginning of the meeting, establish your role as a neutral facilitator by explaining what it means to be a neutral facilitator.

During the meeting, give the work back to the group:

- Set aside your own interests in where a conversation or meeting should go
- Focus the group on the meeting results so they can make decisions that move toward their results
- Give the work of problem solving and decision making back to the group by allowing them to answer their own questions and make their own decisions
- Create space for people to speak regardless of how you feel about their personal preferences and opinions
- Do not express agreement or disagreement verbally or non-verbally with comments you like or dislike



At the end of the meeting, review any decisions and action commitments (e.g., who will do what by when) made by the group.



Proposal-based Decision Making

Proposal-based decision-making (PBDM) is a method for making decisions as a group. PBDM is simultaneously challenging and powerful. The goal is to get everyone to agree to a particular decision or solution. PBD is a multi-step process that will require you to respond and adapt while in the room with participants.

Example Process

Vote

Clearly state the decision or solution being suggested. Ask all participants to vote yes, maybe, or no. There are many ways you can have people vote. For example, you might have them give you a thumbs up, sideways, or down. Or you might use an online voting platform. Make it clear to people that they will be asked for more details if they vote maybe or no so they're not surprised by the follow-up conversation.



Discuss the Maybe/No Votes

Talk with people who voted maybe. Ask them: what would it take to get you to vote yes? Once you've talked with everyone who voted maybe, then talk with people who voted no.

Vote Again

Clearly state the revised decision or solution that came out of conversations with the maybe/no votes. Vote again using the same method. If you've reached a consensus, celebrate!



Plan Next Steps

If you can't get everyone to agree, determine your next step. First, ask people, what can the group live with? If you still can't reach a consensus, you may need to pause the conversation, give people time to think about it independently, and return to the decision later.





Welcoming & Acknowledging Contribution

A key component of results-based facilitation is the meetings should be a conversation rather than simply a presentation of information. If we want to encourage engagement and participation, we have to create an environment that welcomes and appreciates participants' contributions.

Key Strategies

Gratitude

Show gratitude to participants by thanking them for their contributions. You might thank participants when they engage. For example, you might thank a participant after a particularly meaningful contribution. You might thank participants at the end of a section and explain they deserve a break now. You should also thank participants for the time and effort they put into the conversation at the end.



Opposing Viewpoints

Recognize when different viewpoints are brought up but don't get stressed. All the different viewpoints can be charted and recognized without causing a problem.

Feedback

If someone gives you feedback, thank them. Showing appreciation for their feedback doesn't mean you're making a commitment to make changes. Then, take time to consider that feedback at a time that works for you.

