

THE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE FACILITATORS

Effective facilitators organize the conversations that other people have. Their role is to guide the conversation by defining the desired outcomes, deciding the sequence of topics, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, asking relevant questions, limiting non-productive communication, and summarizing the conclusions reached.

Highly effective facilitators focus on doing the following 15 things regularly. They:

1. Establish the goals: both of the meeting itself and of the process overall
2. Define the agenda (in advance or at the meeting)
3. Deal with ground rule violations quickly and fairly
4. Define and manage the ground rules
5. Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities
6. Ensure that everyone's voice is heard
7. Keep their own voice and personality in check
8. Probe for clarity; make sure everyone understands what's being said
9. Document the key points and agreements so they are visible to the group
10. Test and validate consensus as needed
11. Help people put their conflicts on the table and address them productively
12. Document action steps, responsibilities, and timing
13. Clarify what communication needs to happen after the meeting
14. Summarize key decisions at the end of the meeting
15. Ask people to evaluate the quality of the meeting and what to do differently next time