

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, asking powerful, open-ended questions, ensuring that everyone's voice is heard, limiting non-productive communication, and summarizing the conclusions reached.

Highly effective facilitators focus on doing the following 13 things regularly.

1. Communicate the goals, both of the meeting itself and of the process overall
2. Define the agenda (ideally in advance of the meeting)
3. Establish and maintain ground rules
4. Clarify decision-making roles and responsibilities
5. Ask powerful, open-ended questions to elicit thoughts and ideas
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. Test and validate consensus as needed
10. Help people put their conflicts on the table and address them productively
11. Document key points and agreements so they are visible to the group
12. Document action steps, responsibilities, and timing
13. Clarify what communication needs to happen after the meeting