

FACILITATION FUNDAMENTALS

TOP TEN TIPS
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1. **Listen.** As a facilitator, your listening skills play a big role in your success. You must closely listen to everything that is said and watch people's body language. Often you'll need to summarize what people say to create an environment where they feel heard.
2. **Develop the Agenda.** Before the meeting, create an agenda that has clear items that lead to actual decisions. Estimate how long each item will take and review at the start of the meeting.
3. **Serve Everyone.** As a facilitator, you are there to serve the entire group, which means you don't take anyone's side. Your job is to create a safe space where everyone feels like they can share their opinions with each other.
4. **Steward the Process.** Your job is to ensure the decision making process moves forward. You will make decisions on how to best move this process forward. You will never make content decisions for the group—that's the group's job.
5. **Set Ground Rules.** Go over some common ground rules at the start such as testing assumptions, sharing all relevant information and focusing on interests, not positions.
6. **Manage Conflict.** Rather than ignoring conflict as it comes up, recognize it when it happens. Attempt to find the source of the conflict. Use ground rules to call out behavior that doesn't build effective group process. Look for common ground. Take a break if you need it.
7. **Decide How to Decide.** There are different decision making options: consensus, consensus minus one, majority vote, super majority vote, etc. Every group needs to agree on what their decision making method is before they start making decisions.
8. **Pay Attention to Time.** Remind the group how they are doing on time. Give them a ten- or five-minute warning if time is almost up. Ask the group if they want to extend the amount of time on a topic if they run out of time.
9. **Use Your Toolbox.** Some tools include:
 - paraphrase what people say
 - brainstorm—ask participants to generate ideas without passing judgement
 - draw quiet people out by asking questions
 - do a "go-round," where each person in turn speaks on the issue
 - track the various conversations going on
10. **Practice. We learn facilitation by doing it.** We get better at it by reflecting on how we did and constantly learning new ways to do it better.

TO-DO LIST

- Develop an agenda beforehand with the leaders of the group.
- Write the agenda before the meeting and post it where everyone can see it.
- Research different ice-breaking activities to build stronger groups.
- Bring the following items to the meeting: clock, markers, easel & poster board.
- Greet each person as they come into the meeting room.
- Research the group you are facilitating beforehand.
- Maintain a positive attitude.
- Treat everyone with respect and appreciation.
- Ask for feedback at the end of the meetings you facilitate.
- Practice!

Ron Milam has over 14 years of experience facilitating meetings and developing leadership for over 50 organizations.

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