
Multiple Roles of Facilitators

It is possible for a group to get some great work done in a meeting without any one person taking on the role of “facilitator.” But, a good facilitator can make it much easier for a group to get great work done! The box below suggests five ways you can successfully fulfill the role of a meeting facilitator.

Fulfilling the Role of a Meeting Facilitator

- Design a process for the meeting, and make that process explicit.
- Structure ways for people to participate in the process.
- Respond to what emerges by exercising flexibility in the process.
- Foster inclusive and productive dialogue.
- Build new thinking and communication skills among the group.

All too often, meeting facilitators also take on (or are handed) a number of other jobs beyond what is outlined above. The graphic below illustrates just some of the multiple, sometimes overlapping, hats we wear. One of the first things you want to do as a facilitator is to figure out exactly what your job will be – and check whether you feel you can hold those multiple jobs well.

