Facilitation & Partnering Skills: Enhancing the Mediator’s Toolbox

Dimensions of Diversity

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Introducing the presenters . . .

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- Bob Shearer, Mediator/Arbitrator & Attorney; rashearer@hotmail.com
Session overview

- Discussion of skills and processes common to mediators and facilitators
“Facilitator” defined

- One whose role is to make an action or process easy or easier
What do facilitators do?

Plan, guide and manage a group event to ensure that the group’s objectives are met effectively with clear thinking, good participation and buy-in from everyone involved.

Source: MindTools.com
Types of Facilitators

- In-house vs. external
- Subject matter expertise
- Process expertise
The Role of a Facilitator

- Logistics: Coordinates with group leaders on dates, times, location, room arrangement & equipment, participants’ list, etc.
- Develops the agenda in concert with group leaders
- Sets ground rules (e.g., consensus, one person speaking at a time, etc.)
The Role of a Facilitator (cont)

- Keeps the meeting on schedule and on point
- Records information or supervises its recording
- Generates a post-meeting report or coordinates the report with a member of the group
Characteristics of an effective facilitator

- Sets a positive tone for the discussions
- Keeps the group on task, but, also spends time building relationships
- Initiates conversations rather than waiting for someone else to do so
- Asks rather than tells; solicits the opinions of others
- Negotiates rather than dictates decisions
Characteristics (cont)

- Listens without interrupting
- Does not evaluate ideas
- Intuitive; knows when to intervene & when to let the conversation go
- Self-confident
- Persuasive and engaging
- Enthusiastic, outgoing, good sense of humor
Characteristics (cont)

- Keeps the big picture in mind while working on details
- Neutral & non-judgmental; protects all members of the group
- Steers the group toward “win-win” solutions

Effective communication skills for facilitators

- Active listening: show interest; make eye contact
- Modeling: non-judgmental; watch non-verbals; have some fun
- Summarizing: paraphrase ("correct me if I am wrong"); summarize at key points & end
- Focusing & pacing: keep group on topic; stay on track
Communication skills (con’t)

- Recognize progress: congratulate group as tasks are completed
- Waiting/silence: sometimes the hardest thing to do is nothing
- Scanning/observing: nurture full participation; watch non-verbals for attention lulls, confusion or discontent; take breaks, change the pace/topic, etc.
Communication skills (cont)

- Inclusion: make sure everyone has an opportunity to participate by encouraging input from those who have been silent.

- Pickett Institute Curriculum
Techniques for identifying issues & ideas

- Brainstorming
- Nominal grouping (round robin)
- Slip method
- Subgroups
- Force field analysis (restraining/supporting drivers)
More facilitation tools

- Room arrangement, logistics
- Icebreakers
- Small breakout groups
- Flipcharting, include all ideas
- Strategic breaks
- Check “temperature” of room, participants
Dealing with difficult participants

- Troublesome behavior that negatively affects productivity & cohesiveness in terms of openness, trust, commitment & participation
- When to intervene: behavior continues too long or is severe
- How to intervene: directly, but tactfully
Dealing with difficult participants

- Goal: change undesirable behavior without scolding or embarrassing, especially in front of the group

- Tactics:
  - During the meeting, engage others
  - In private, engage person as an “ally”

- Pickett Institute Curriculum
Common types of troublesome group members

- The Mummy
- The Windbag
- The Rambler
- The Homesteader

- Pickett Institute Curriculum
The Mummy

Query: Why doesn’t he/she participate?

Facilitator tactics:

- Be patient
- Make sure she/he understands process/issue
- Give the Mummy a lead role in a warm-up exercise or as a subgroup facilitator
- Engage the Mummy on topics of known expertise
The Windbag

Facilitator tactics:

- Get consensus ground rule limiting time for comments by single individual
- Direct questions to other members
- Use non-verbal signals; avoid direct eye contact, focus on others in the meeting room
- Do not assign her/him subgroup leadership roles
The Rambler

- Facilitator tactics:
  - Cite time constraints, ask for short version
  - Use pause to redirect the group back to the agenda
  - Do not assign him/her a subgroup leadership role
  - Make the Rambler a session recorder
The Homesteader

- Problem: Homesteader takes an initial position and is reluctant to consider alternatives

- Facilitator tactics:
  - Emphasize consensus building
  - Overwhelm with facts
  - Enlist others for peer pressure
  - Provide a graceful way out with an alternative
Our “lessons learned”

- What facilitation strategies and techniques have worked well (most of the time)?
- What strategies and techniques have not been successful?
What is Partnering?

Owner/User

Contractor

Other Stakeholder(s)
Key Elements of Partnering

- Common Goals
- Team Decision Making
- Open Communication
- Win-Win Problem Solving
- Principled Negotiation
- Cooperation
- Shared Risk
- Synergy
- Trust
Typical agenda (tentative)

- Welcome & introductions
- Workshop overview
- Identify stakeholder goals, responsibilities & expectations of each other
- Identify stakeholder decision-making processes
- Develop an issue resolution process
Partnering agenda (cont)

- Develop a partnering agreement
- Identify priority issues, potential obstacles to success
- Develop & discuss action plans
- Develop follow-up plan
- Select partnering “champions”
- Summarize actions & 30-60-90 day priorities
Partnering Team Members

- Name/organization
- Role/responsibilities
- Hometown
- Family
- Hobbies/interests off the job
- First or most interesting job
- Word that describes effective partnering
Workshop Objectives

- Establish Project Goals
- Draft Partnering Agreement
- Identify Critical Issues
- Commit to Team Problem-Solving
- Create Action Plans
- Develop Issue Resolution Process
- Plan for Assessment & Follow-up
- Start Building a Cohesive Management Team
Dispute Management Alternatives

- Prevention
- Negotiation
- Facilitated Negotiation
- Mediation
- Arbitration
- Litigation
- Appeals
- Partnering Process

Loss of Control/Damage to Relationship vs. Time and Expense
True or false?

We are responsible for each other’s success.
Effective Teams . . .

- Clear Purpose
- Informality
- Participation
- Listening
- Civilized Disagreement
- Consensus Decisions
- Open Communication
- Clear Roles & Responsibilities
- Shared Leadership
- External Relations
- Diverse Styles
- Self-Assessment
The Five Behaviors of a Cohesive Team™ Model
The Value of Trust

- One’s ability to build, maintain, and re-establish trust is the key skill needed in the new global economy.

Stephen Covey, 2006
Goals & Responsibilities

- What are your primary goals for this project/contract?
- What are your expectations of the other stakeholder(s)?
- Describe your organization’s decision-making chain.
NAVFAC

1. ORG: GOALS/REST

- Base
- High quality
- Sustainable
- Safe construction
- Health/wellness
- Easy to build and maintain
- Minimal impact to race
- Innovation with local input

2. NAVFAC

- Innovative concepts
- Local input
Critical Issues

- The following issues, challenges, or obstacles on this contract need to be addressed by the team today:

  1.
  2.
  3.
  4.
Principled Negotiation

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Seek creative, win-win options
- Use objective criteria to resolve differences

Source: Ury & Fisher, *Getting to Yes*
Action Planning

- State the issue in detail.
- What are the causes?
- Why is it a high priority? What are the consequences/impacts of not getting the issue resolved?
- Describe in detail the action to be taken; responsible/accountable person(s); timeline; and method of assessing outcome.
Issue Resolution Process

Issue/Dispute Level 1

Contractor Site

Owner Site

Other Stakeholder(s) Site
Partnering Challenges

- Skeptical of process
- Resistance to Change
- Top Management Not Fully Committed
- Uneven Commitment
- Changing Conditions
- Not Sharing Risks

- Poor Communication
- Loss of Trust
- Lack of Teamwork
- Action Plans Ignored
- Unresolved Issues
- Loss of Momentum
- Failure to Follow Up
Two Steps to Achieving Synergy

1. Would you be willing to search for a solution that is better than what either party has proposed?
2. A simple ground rule: You can’t make your own point until you have restated the other person’s point to his or her satisfaction.

Source: Stephen Covey
Partnering Agreement

Originally Adopted 12th of March 2015
Reaffirmed 6th of October 2015

We, the partners of the REPAIR REPLACE PRIMARY RUNWAY 07-25 RUNWAY project at LRAFB, agree to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and cooperation to implement and complete a safe, quality project to promote these common goals and objectives.

The goal of the TEAM is to provide the customer an excellent project that will allow the contractors to make a reasonable profit and earn an outstanding performance evaluation by promoting these common goals and objectives:

- A safe and continuous project with no lost time accidents.
- Quality from all members of the team.
- A complete awareness of potential negative impacts to the on-going mission.
- A project that is completed within the required contract duration.
- Problem resolution and decision making at the lowest possible level.
- Maintain positive relationships by working as a team; building trust; being fair and reasonable with each other.
- A project that minimizes impacts to the environment.

In fulfilling the terms of this agreement we will use the core values of trust, responsibility and understanding to foster development of a safe work environment; clear, mutual goals; open communication; expedient problem-solving; strong, effective relationships; and teamwork.
Partnering Action Plan – Follow-Up

- Who will be the key partnering “champions” from each organization?
- How will we assess the effectiveness of partnering?
- How will we monitor the action plans?
- How will new players be oriented?
- Follow-up activities?
Short-Term Priorities

What actions should be started and/or completed within the next:

- 30 days?
- 60 days?
- 90 days?
Follow-Up Workshop Objectives

- Assess partnering team effectiveness
- Review status of earlier action plans
- Review, reaffirm partnering statement
- Identify continuing and new issues
- Develop action plans for priority issues
- Plan follow-up activities
- Schedule next workshop
Stages of Team Development: Where are We?

1. Forming (Start-Up)
2. Storming (Conflict)
3. Norming (Teamwork)
4. Performing (Achievement)
5. Transforming (Change)
Partnering Team Assessment

- Mutual commitment to project goals
- Open communications, sharing of information, responsiveness
- Prompt decision-making/problem-solving
- Team cohesiveness – trust, respect, encouragement
- Reasonable sharing of risk
- Mutual understanding of contract requirements
- Timely, accurate document processing (RFI, submittals, etc.)
- Scheduling and planning
- Quality of performance
- Safety
- Overall project management team effectiveness
Lessons Learned . . .

What practices, processes, etc., have worked well and should be continued on this or future projects involving these stakeholders?

What are the main opportunities for improvement?
Questions and comments?
References & Resources

- Facilitator’s Tool Kit. [www.uspto.gov/offices/Facilitation](http://www.uspto.gov/offices/Facilitation)
- Community Tool Box, Group Facilitation & Problem-Solving, [http://ctb.ku.edu](http://ctb.ku.edu)
- Understanding the Art of Facilitation, [www.cpwr.com](http://www.cpwr.com)
- Ingrid Bens, *Facilitating with Ease & Facilitation at a Glance*
- Fran Rees, *How to Lead Work Teams*
- International Association of Facilitators, [www.iaf-world.org](http://www.iaf-world.org)
References & Resources

- Roger M. Schwartz, *The Skilled Facilitator*, etc.
- Sam Kaner, *Facilitator’s Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*
- Pickett Institute Curriculum, ILJ
- D. Hackett & C. Martin, Facilitation Skills for Team Leaders