

FACILITATING GUIDE

AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR FACILITATES SO:

- Participants know the group is in charge (not the facilitator)
- The group effectively makes decisions (or discusses topics)
- Allows each person to contribute

The facilitator role is a dynamic, flexible role. Here are some **facilitator tips** that are useful in many situations. Take them and adapt them. If your team likes to create the agenda on the fly, then there is no reason for the facilitator to take that role. Do what works and leave the rest.

- Create the agenda with input from others
- Manages the pace and schedule
- Works to create psychological safety and encourages authentic participation:
 - Seeks the widest range of perspectives
 - Gently pushes people out of our comfort zones (brave vs. safe space)
 - Supports roughly equal talking time
 - Frames overlapping and divergent views ("what I'm hearing is... is that right?")
 - Helps participants reframe from "positions" to "interests"
 - Keeps conversation going- asks if there are clarifying questions
- Keep the meeting focused - Limiting cross talk and focuses conversation. Balancing this is the most challenging role of the facilitator
- Confirms decisions, agreements, and next steps
- Handles logistics. Make sure equipment is working, etc.



FACILITATOR TOOLS

Fist to Five

A simple tool that offers a great way of checking the level of agreement across a group. Someone says, "Shall we do a fist-to-five?" On the count of three, everyone responds to a proposal in unison by holding up between zero and five fingers: If everyone is a three or higher, with at least some fours or fives, the group accepts the proposal and moves on. If anyone shows a two or lower, the proposer pauses to listen to the concerns with the goal of resolving those concerns and completing another fist-to-five.



0 fingers (a fist): No way, terrible choice, I will not go along with it.



One finger up: Object strongly, needs to be resolved now.



Two fingers up: Objection that needs to be addressed before we can move forward.



Three fingers: OK with proposed solution.



Four fingers: I like this idea.



Five fingers: Highly positive and could champion it.

Dot Voting

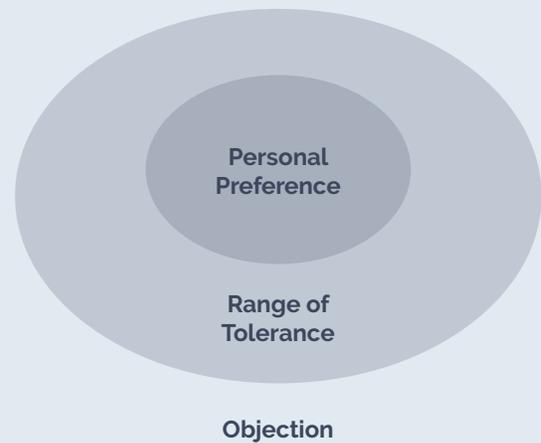
Teams increase positive results by six times and cut failure rates in half when they double the number of choices considered before deciding, according to research by Cloverpop. With multiple options, narrowing the list quickly can be challenging. In dot voting, each participant gets a set number of "dots," typically between three and five, they can place by the idea(s) that resonate most for them. One variation allows people to place more than one dot on an idea. Once dot voting is complete you can quickly see which ideas resonate with the group or if opinions diverge.

Example.

What should we order for lunch?	
● ● ●	Vegetarian Burger Platter
● ● ● ● ●	Steak and Potatoes
● ● ● ● ●	Indian Buffet
● ● ● ●	Stir-fry

Disagree and commit

For a team to move forward, sometimes people must commit, even if a decision does not line up with their personal preferences. If a team embraces the disagree and commit philosophy, once a decision has been made, everyone works proactively for its success. Support this as a facilitator by asking 'are you willing to disagree and still commit?'



Safe enough to try

Jeff Bezos made famous categorizing decisions into two categories: type 1 (or one-way door) and type 2 (or two-way door). Type 1 decisions are consequential and irreversible or nearly irreversible. If we walk through that door, we can't return. Most decisions are type 2, or can be divided into type 2 decisions. "Safe enough to try" is a concept that promotes moving forward quickly on type 2 decisions. If a proposal is safe enough to try, then allow it to proceed.

Rounds

A simple procedure where a group goes around the physical or virtual room with each person sharing their opinion on a topic without cross-talk. No one speaks for a second time until everyone has been heard and there is no cross-talk. It's a quick way to get every voice into the room.

Check in Questions

If your group size is smaller than twelve people, a great practice for fostering connectedness and focus is to do a check in round. This is where you ask a question or offer a conversation prompt to help people arrive, be present and connect to one another. The check-in question can be as simple as "How are you feeling in this moment?" If the group size is larger than about 12, consider breaking into groups of 2 or 3 for doing a check up.

Scribe

After the facilitator, it's the most important role. It should not be filled by the facilitator. Capturing action items is critical for things moving forward.

If you would like to have a complimentary discussion to talk about how this can apply in your organization, please reach out to travis@humanfirstworks.com.