

The Interactive Facilitator Running Engaging Productive Meetings

'It was unnecessary for me to attend that meeting.'

'There was no clear leadership in the meeting - we followed irrelevant tangents.'

'No one was present during the meeting -- we were all multi-tasking.'

'I couldn't get my voice heard in that meeting.'

'I have so many unproductive meetings and no time to do actual work.'

These complaints are universal in today's business world, regardless of type of industry or size of company.

This experiential session explores facilitation and communication skills for running a highly effective, interactive, efficient, productive, inclusive meeting.

Part One explores Facilitator **self-awareness** and **presence** skills: body language, use of voice (especially useful for virtual meetings), and emotional congruency (matching message delivery with message content).

Part Two explores **audience-awareness**: learning styles and communication styles.

We practice methods that address how various audiences absorb information (visual, aural, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal). We also examine the listening tendencies of the four communication styles (see The Communication Compass). This guides the facilitator in sequencing the meeting to address the needs and hold the attention of all styles.

Part Three explores **tips and techniques** for assuring all voices are heard, addressing conflict, and making productive agenda choices in-the-moment.

-Participants are invited to submit a meeting or conversation scenario (real world, actual current challenges) that they would like to practice.

-Using a "fishbowl" method (i.e. a blend of observation and participation), participants will practice the skills they learned in the morning session, and will learn new techniques as they move through the simulated scenario.

Techniques include:

- Starting a meeting effectively
- Emotional Check-Ins
- Collaborative agenda-setting
- Setting ground rules

- Generating dialogue through effective questions
- Generating dialogue through vulnerability and curiosity
- Getting all voices heard/ Uncovering hidden dissent
- Checking for understanding and/or agreement
- Handling meeting breakdowns (e.g. confusion, disagreement, sidebars, cross talk)
- Charting/recording
- Reflecting back (individual and group level)
- Pacing, handling deviations from agenda
- Closing, gaining commitment for action and next steps

After program completion, participants understand their own strengths and challenges in Facilitator Presence; they also understand the potential needs of their audience and how to design and manage meetings to meet those needs. Also, participants practice and/or observe a variety of techniques for handling a typical meeting pitfalls. Finally, participants learn how to take risks to run their meetings differently, and embrace the new paradigm that their meetings need not follow the same unhealthy, unproductive formula of all the rest!

Half-day to full-day session.