

*Getting on Track: Better Management through
Basic Financial Statements*

*A Guide To
Effective
Facilitation*



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Introduction

By definition, a **facilitator** is one who skillfully assists a group of people identify the common goals and plan to achieve them. A facilitator takes an unbiased approach to these goals, making it possible to achieve consensus during times of disagreement and refocus the group on the common goals.

A **trainer**, however, does not take an active role in the attainment of goals, but rather takes the lead in providing a body of knowledge for a group.

These two distinct forms of presentation hold utmost value in the world of professional development and increase of productivity and profitability.

As a trainer, or “**Sage on the Stage**,” you have the responsibility of divulging new information that will be utilized for the betterment of your participant. As a facilitator, or “**Guide on the Side**,” you will be accountable to working with your participants to find the route to better productivity.

Without knowledge, there can be no action. These two roles are dependent on one another. When training and facilitation have been practiced well, the participants will take ownership in the decisions made and goals that are determined.

Have you ever participated in a training program that left you feeling more confident and competent – one in which you really got a lot out of the learning experience? Or, have you ever taken a workshop that left you disappointed, confused or maybe even angry? What makes for a great presentation, training program or learning experience? The answer to that question could be a lot of things – the content, the learning experience, the participants in the class, etc. However, if you think back to a class or workshop that you truly enjoyed, the quality of the facilitator is probably one of the reasons why you liked it.

For a facilitator to be great, he/she must understand how adults learn. To assist you in this process, participate in this learning example.

LEARNING EXAMPLE:

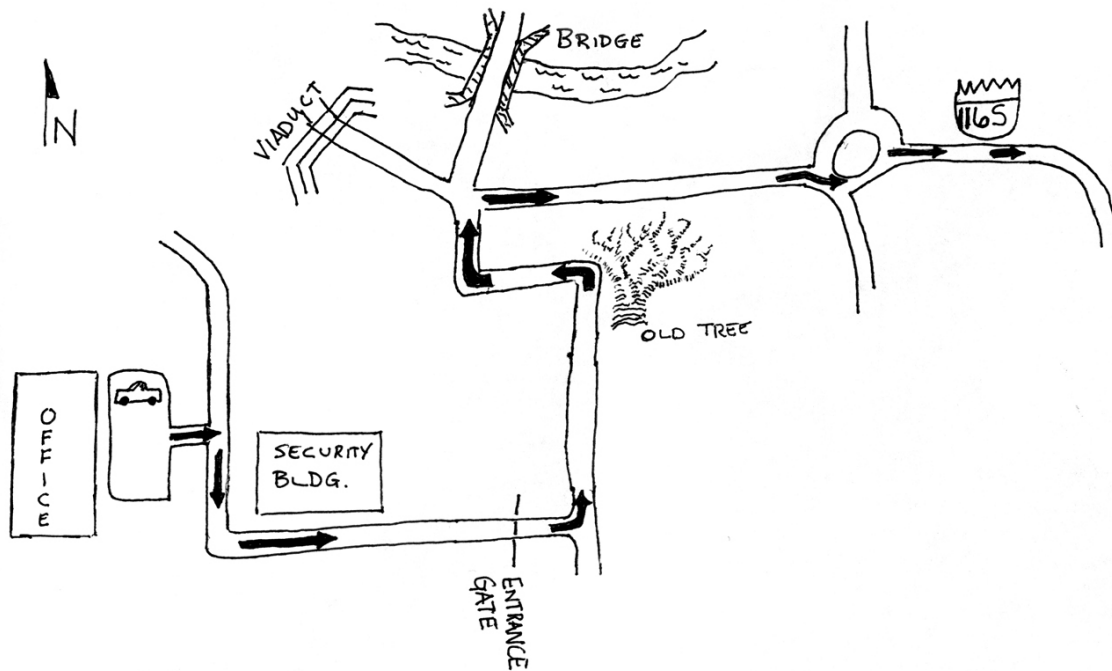
Below are the directions from an office to a house. Read through the directions and study them for 20-30 seconds only. Then, cover the note with a separate sheet of paper and answer the questions on the next page.

From the office, take the road that leads out of the parking lot and follow it right, out past the security building and the gate until it comes to the first “T”. Turn left, by a big tree, it veers left again, then, you will come to a triple fork. If you go straight, you will go over the bridge – don’t do that. If you go left, it will take you under the viaduct and towards the lake, that’s the wrong way. Take the right branch and, at the next branch, take another right around the roundabout where you go to the second road. That’s 116 S. It says south, but it really goes east. Stay straight on this road and when you get to the end; my house will be on the left.

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where is the parking lot?
- 2) What do you have to pass to get out of the office complex?
- 3) What do you see just before you get to the second fork?
- 4) Do you go over or under the viaduct?
- 5) What highway do you take?

Now, study the map for 20-30 seconds. Then, cover the map and answer the questions on the next page.



ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- 1) Where is the parking lot?
- 2) What do you have to pass to get out of the office complex?
- 3) What do you see just before you get to the second fork?
- 4) Do you go over or under the viaduct?
- 5) What highway do you take?

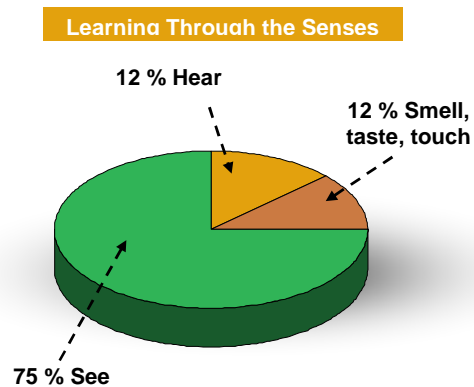
How did you do? If you are like most people, you found the second set of directions easier to follow.

The same information, presented in different ways, has a significant impact on learning. As a facilitator, you control how the information in your session will be presented. Understanding some basic learning principles will help you present your content in a way that will have a positive impact on learning for your participants.

Who Are My Learners? Understanding Learning Styles

Although every person has an individual style for organizing and understanding new information, most people have similar preferences for acquiring and learning new information. Most individuals prefer to learn through one of the following three channels:

- Seeing — visual learner
- Hearing — auditory learner
- Touching/doing — kinesthetic learner



No individual is solely one type of learner. Rather, they are an amalgamation of all three. However, most learners have a *preference* for acquiring information through one channel. Therefore, as a facilitator, you must try to engage all three types of learners in your programs.

Because each learning style is unique, and because we are often a combination of styles, it is important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of all three types of learners.

VISUAL LEARNERS

Visual learners learn best by seeing new information. Visual learners may prefer verbal information (i.e., reading information or seeing words) or nonverbal information (i.e., pictures or graphics that help represent the information).

	Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Teaching Tips
<i>Visual Learner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Need to see something to truly understand it■ May have trouble following lectures or spoken directions■ Often misinterpret words■ Have strong sense of color■ May have artistic abilities■ May say, “It looks good to me”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use graphics to help reinforce key learning concepts■ Color code sections to help organize content■ Provide written directions■ Use charts and diagrams when possible■ Encourage learners to imagine concepts or “see” ideas in their heads

AUDITORY LEARNERS

Auditory learners learn best by listening to new information.

	Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Teaching Tips
<i>Auditory Learner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prefer to get information by listening — need to hear information to understand ■ Sometimes have difficulty understanding written information and expressing themselves through writing ■ Unable to read body language and facial expressions well ■ May have trouble following written directions ■ May say, “It sounds good to me” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explain information orally rather than relying on learners to read and synthesize directions or charts ■ Encourage open discussions and orally sharing outcomes of exercises

KINESTHETIC LEARNERS

Kinesthetic learners prefer hands-on experience to learn and acquire new skills or information.

	Learning Style Clues	Learning Style Teaching Tips
<i>Kinesthetic Learner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prefer hands-on learning ■ Often don't need to read directions to assemble something ■ May have difficulty sitting still and focusing ■ Learn better when physical activity is involved ■ May be very well coordinated and have good athletic ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Engage in active learning (making models, doing label work, role playing, etc.) ■ Take frequent breaks ■ Use computer or models to reinforce learning through sense of touch ■ Incorporate activity to demonstrate abilities

Think About It

To aid you in preparing for your next training session, take a moment to consider how you might address the different learning styles in your audience.

I will engage visual learners by:

Strategy

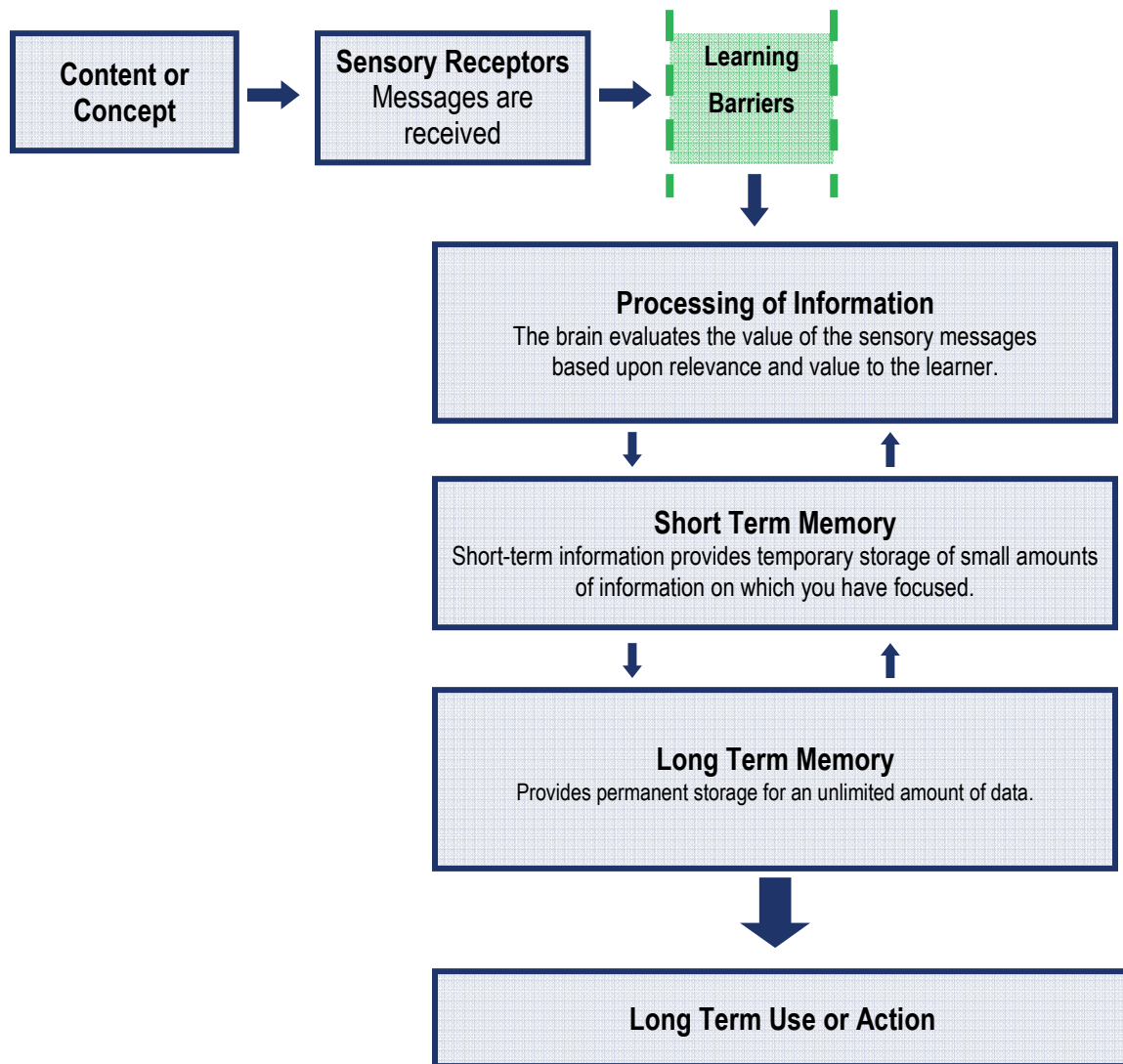
I will engage auditory learners by:

Strategy

I will engage kinesthetic learners by:

Strategy

From Concept to Understanding



SENSORY RECEPTORS

Every day your five senses receive hundreds of thousands of bits of information and data. This information is passed to the brain for processing.

BARRIERS TO LEARNING

As the brain processes information, several factors can create barriers to learning. These include:

- **Emotional Barriers** – *Needs, attitudes and emotions that get in the way of communication. For example, suppose a participant has had an argument with his/her spouse prior to coming to the session. He/She will be more focused on reliving the argument than they are on your presentation. Or, if previous training experiences have been “painful” or unproductive, they are likely to come in with negative expectations, which will impede future learning.*
- **Physical Barriers** – *Several environmental factors can also impede learning. The temperature of a room, extraneous noise, sitting too long in one position, and outside distractions are all examples of physical barriers to learning.*

Effective facilitators analyze their target audience and facility before a session begins to both identify and remove potential learning barriers.

PROCESSING OF INFORMATION

Much of the information the brain receives is not important to an individual. As sensory data is received, the brain evaluates it for relevance and value. Information that is not deemed as valuable or relevant is not likely to be retained.

SHORT TERM MEMORY

Short term memory provides temporary storage of small amounts of information on which you have focused. This is the memory storage you use when you look up a phone number and remember it just long enough to press the buttons on the phone. After a minute or two passes, you forget the number.

Short term memory can only hold about **seven to nine bits of information at a time**. However, short term memory will also let you store information in *chunks*. Chunking will allow participants to increase the amount of information they can briefly retain.

For example, if you were shown this list of letters and numbers for ten seconds and asked to remember it, you probably couldn't... there is too much information for your short term memory to hold:

229FBISTAFFDID7SETSBY9

However, if you split the data into chunks, you can assign some sort of *meaning* to each group, and you may be able to retain this larger amount of information in your short term memory.

229 FBI STAFF DID 7 SETS BY 9

LONG TERM MEMORY

Information from short term memory is transferred to long term memory by focusing our attention on it, thinking about it, considering its meaning, and relating it to other information already stored in long term memory.

The brain can store information in its long term memory indefinitely.

Things that can improve the storage and recall of information in long term memory:

- When introducing new concepts, relate it to other concepts with similar meanings. The brain seeks to make sense and “organize” new information by comparing it to similar concepts you have already learned. The use of analogies is an effective way to communicate complex ideas.
- Present information using multiple modalities (auditory, visual, and kinesthetic). Learning occurs by the encoding of new information in permanent long term memory. According to a theory called Dual Encoding, content communications with text, graphics and activity sends multiple “memory codes”. Having two opportunities for encoding into long term memory increases the likelihood that content will be retained and remembered.
- Practice! Provide participants with opportunities to use the information you have given them. The more they use the information in relevant situations or simulations, the more likely they are to retain it.

Think About It

In the table below, list all of the potential barriers your audience members may experience prior to and during your session. Then, working in pairs, generate a list of things you could do to break through these barriers.

Potential Barriers to Learning	Things I Could Do to Break Through These Barriers
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	

Getting Ready to Learn

Motivation

- *Voluntary Audience – They are there because they want to be.*
- *Captive Audience – They have to be there! You will really have to give them a reason why this information is beneficial to them.*

Purpose

- *What is the audience expecting to get out of this?*

Predisposition towards the topic

- *What do they know and how do they feel about the topic?*

What's In It For Me? Stimulating Adult Learners

Adults don't learn the way children learn. Teaching adults as if they are children in a classroom is not only ineffective, it also is counterproductive because:

- Adults are mature — they don't have the desire to learn just because they are in training
- Adults want to know *What's In It For Me (WIIFM)* — they want to see how the information you are presenting is directly related to their current, specific needs and concerns
- Adults bring unique experiences to the training — include opportunities that allow participants to share their knowledge and experience

Therefore, create learning experiences for adults by:

- Engaging the audience in learning and problem-solving
- Offering opportunities for practice, application and discussion

Think About It

In the space below, brainstorm some WIIFMs (i.e., What's In It For Me) that you can share with participants during a training session.

WHAT IS MY PURPOSE? THE IMPORTANCE OF OBJECTIVES

Think about the last time you planned a driving trip — you probably sat down with a map and tried to figure out the best way to make it to your destination. You may have decided to take only highways, to make the trip shorter. Or you may have decided that even though it would take a little longer, it would be more interesting to take a few detours along the way. Despite your decisions, you knew that without your map, it would have taken you much longer to arrive at your end destination, if you ever made it there.

Learning objectives act much like this map, providing a written description of the path you will follow in helping training participants arrive at their destination of increased knowledge or improved performance.

A learning objective is a statement of what you want the participants to be able to know and/or do differently at the end of the training.

To accomplish this, learning objectives often are written in a format similar to this:

- Following today's session, you will have an answer to these questions.
Specifically, after this workshop, you will be able to:
 - Describe the implications of key agricultural trends on your business
 - Identify the four types of value
 - Create segments of customers based on value
 - Quantify the value-in-use of your products and services
 - Communicate your differential advantage
 - Create an action plan for improvement

USING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Present learning objectives at the beginning of your training to:

- Help orient learners to what you will be covering during the day
- Ensure that all objectives are covered

Regularly refer back to the objectives, to show participants what has been addressed.

Think About It

Take a minute to consider the following:

- 1) In one sentence, how would you describe the purpose of an upcoming training you will conduct?
- 2) What are the objectives for this training?
- 3) What are two strategies you can use to ensure that participants are aware of the objectives throughout the training?

Attention vs. Retention

ATTENTION VS. RETENTION

Adults can listen for **90** minutes with attention but only for **20** minutes with retention. Why do we forget information? *We forget new information because it is not useful to us. Other times we forget it because of the way the information was presented to us.*

- Change presentation techniques every 20 minutes.
- Remember that most adults can only listen with complete attention for two to three minutes. Ask for participation every few minutes.
- Accept that participants will take a “mental vacation” every once and a while.
- Make sure participants see real-life value in everything you are presenting.

Six Basic Facilitation Principles

- 1) For learning to occur, learners or participants must perceive information by using their five senses. Each of our senses has different processing capabilities. Almost 95% of our sensory input is provided by sight and hearing. However, the more senses we engage, the more we perceive.

Facilitation Principle:

Direct your instruction at more than one sense at a time.

- 2) Once information is perceived, it must be processed by our brains. The short term memory capacity of the brain is limited. Therefore, the brain can process only five to nine items at a given time.

Facilitation Principle:

Limit the amount of information you provide to participants. Focus on the critical content to facilitate the information processing.

- 3) In a given day, our senses are bombarded with thousands of pieces of information. Our brain and nervous system automatically select what is relevant to us. Information that captures our attention and is relevant is more likely to be processed and moved into long term memory.

Facilitation Principle:

Create messages that capture participants' attention and are relevant to their needs. Use examples and analogies that relate to the participants' previous experiences.

- 4) Our long term memory has almost limitless capacity. As we perceive information, our brains begin to organize and try to make sense of it. However, we cannot always retrieve information we have processed.

Facilitation Principle:

Organize information you present into meaningful “bits”. Use strategies which require participants to link new information with prior knowledge. Use metaphors, graphs, tables and images to encourage this process.

- 5) The more information is used, the more likely it is to be remembered.

Facilitation Principle:

Provide plenty of opportunities for your participants to “practice” using new information.

- 6) Three internal factors influence how well we learn: our prior knowledge (previous background, experiences and education), our ability (general intelligence, learning ability and/or perform a specific skill) and our motivation (how much value do we attribute to learning and what are the benefits of learning it).

Facilitation Principle:

Assess the knowledge, ability and motivation of your audience. If your audience has limited prior knowledge, organize it into usable “chunks” and explain concepts using easily understood analogies and examples. Provide plenty of opportunities for participants to practice using the information. Motivate participants by showing them the relevance of the information you are sharing and explain how it will benefit them.

Think About It

Working in groups of two, think about the last training session you just facilitated. In the space below, revise the training session to incorporate each of the principles. You will have 20 minutes to adapt your presentation to meet each of the principles.

How Will I Make This Training Stick? Strategies for Retention

Think about important skills you have either learned, or haven't learned so well, over time.

- For the skills or information that you remember, what about your learning experience helped you retain this information?
- For the information that you can't remember as well, why do you feel that it didn't "stick"?

Even the best-written training programs about the most important topics can be a waste of time if the participants don't remember the information. Incorporating activities that stimulate different types of learners and keeping in mind the learning cycle are keys to helping retain information. Below are some principles of adult education to keep in mind to help participants retain information.

1. *Think in Pictures*

If someone says the word "apple," what comes to mind? The letters a-p-p-l-e? Or a picture of a ripe, juicy, delicious apple with a leaf still attached to the stem?

- Show diagrams, pictures, and illustrations of major points in your presentation.
- Share stories that help customers visualize the problem and the results.
- Take participants into the field or show a video for a "live" demonstration, if possible.

2. *Make It Relevant*

- Training or facilitating is about delivering information that is usable by the audience.
- You have to be audience focused. Gear your information towards what is most beneficial to them.
- Give them a reason to listen. Use examples that specifically relate to their experience level.

3. *Emphasize Key Points*

To make sure participants remember key points:

- Review or re-state key points at least six times for maximum retention.
For example:
 - Cover key points in your introduction, during group discussion, when explaining an activity, when debriefing the activity, and when summarizing the training.
- Present the most important information first, last or first and last.
 - Problems, questions, discussion, and exceptions should be handled in the middle of the presentation.
- People remember things that are outstanding or different.
 - Find a way to emphasize key points with a hands-on experience, a field visit, color diagrams or a team problem-solving exercise.

Improving Presentation Skills

PHYSICAL DELIVERY

Use Gestures - should help make a point, not distract. Do not pace or stay in the same spot. Taking a step can help to emphasize a point.

Limit Distractions - monitor your movements. Make sure you are not doing something distracting (tapping a pen, playing with change in pocket, etc.)

Tone and Pace

- Projection – make sure the person in the back of the room can hear you
- Speed – people hear faster than we speak so talk at a good conversation pace
- Fillers – watch for “ahs” and “ums”
- Direction – Talk to the audience, not the visual aids

Enthusiasm

- Creates mood and atmosphere. If you do not get excited about the topic then don't expect your participants to!!
- Practice, Practice, Practice! Make sure you know what you want to say and how long it will take you to say it. No one likes when training sessions run long.

Despite the best planning and preparation for training, it can fall short if the facilitator fails to prepare and plan for the actual *presentation* of the training.

Many people believe that a person is either born with good presentation skills or they aren't. And indeed, some people are more enthusiastic and engaging that

others. However, training that is delivered well is delivered by an individual who is aware of the basics of good presentation skills.

STRATEGIES FOR “MIXING IT UP”

Think about one of your best training or educational experiences.

- What made this experience so outstanding?
- What did the facilitator/teacher do or say that made the experience positive?

As you'll notice, good facilitators focus on the learner and incorporate a variety of different training techniques to teach.

Focusing on the Learner

Learner-focused training seeks to get learner buy-in throughout the training.

- Share the significance of the information you are providing (i.e., remind them “What’s In It For Me?”).
- Create an environment where participants want to learn:
 - Ensure physically comfortable conditions
 - Help participants “save face” by avoiding potentially embarrassing activities and comments
 - Encourage collaborative rather than competitive activities
- Position yourself as a co-learner.

INCORPORATING TRAINING TECHNIQUES

One of the greatest challenges of using new and different training techniques lies in figuring out how to best *incorporate* these techniques.

To start, make sure to set *expectations for participant involvement*. Explain up front what participants will be doing. Explain exactly what you will be doing (e.g., discussing this issue, practicing these steps, etc.).

Leading a Discussion

Discussions can be very valuable — they allow participants to share and build on their own experiences. However, they can be challenging.

- Start by introducing a question.
- If responses are shouted from the audience, acknowledge the speaker, summarize the statement, and write it on the flipchart.
- Seek group input on the comments — do they agree or disagree?
- Ask for specific examples to support — or share your own.

Make sure to use a variety of different questions to generate a variety of responses. Three common types of questions include:

- **Open questions** have no right or wrong answer. They encourage the meeting participant to get involved in the topic.
- **Closed questions** have a factual answer — often a short answer, rather than the explanation you ask for in an open question.
- **Clarifying questions** ask for examples of the topic you are presenting.

The key is to create a *dialectic* interaction, in which a series of questions is asked that help the audience “think through” concepts and apply them.

Watching for Understanding

Eye contact

- Do the participants seem engaged or do they look confused?
- Are they doing other things...making their “to-do” list due to boredom?

Body language

- Signs of understanding – Are they staying engaged in the discussion and nodding with understanding of the information?
- Signs of confusion – Are they trying to see where you are in the printed information or looking at other participants trying to get clarification?

Ending a Good Discussion

Sometimes, participants may get off on a tangent that you have not planned on, but that is very important.

- Ask participants if they'd like to continue the discussion.
- If time is tight, suggest putting the issue in the “parking lot.”
- To refocus energy, look for a segue into the next topic to be covered.
- However, don't end a good discussion just to stay on time. Rather, encourage participants to decide what information they might like to condense so they can continue.

Handling Questions

Often, particularly during a discussion or lecture, participants will have questions about the material. Some presenters believe that if the audience has questions, the material wasn't covered effectively. However, if participants are truly engaged, they should have questions! To handle questions:

- Confirm you understand the question
- Respond directly
- Admit if you don't know the answer/tell them you will find out
- Encourage others to contribute

You can draw in your audience, or turn them away, by how you handle the first question.

Think About it

- Think about the next training session you need to lead.
- Generate a list of open, closed and clarifying questions you could use to improve interaction within your program.
- You will have 10 minutes to complete this activity.

Question Type	Question Samples
Open	
Closed	
Clarifying	

FACILITATION HINTS

- 1) When asking questions of the group, mix up the kind of response process you want to use. You can ask them to respond spontaneously, in writing, or give them a time limit. Again, your choice of response mechanisms should depend upon the type of information you are trying to gather.
- 2) Vary the kind of discussion techniques you use. Do some large groups, some small groups, and maybe some pairs. Each method has value; it all depends on what you want your final outcome to be.
- 3) Use flip charts to capture ideas generated from your discussions. These charts can begin to collect information that will be valuable throughout your training or for post training actions.
- 4) Don't let one participant monopolize the discussion. Encourage others to share. Call on those who haven't contributed much. Most of all make the group comfortable enough so that sharing their ideas is a positive experience. Remember, your ultimate goal is to get everyone as excited as you are about your training topic.
- 5) Be prepared for negative comments or disbelief about some of the information you will share. First and foremost, take a breath and think before you respond. Dissenting opinions aren't bad; if handled well, they can make for some interesting discussion. Remember that everyone is entitled to an opinion, even if you don't agree.
- 6) Prepare follow-up questions that get people thinking when the discussion isn't moving forward. It is very difficult to generate ideas when no one is talking.
- 7) No matter what you do, vary your facilitation techniques and your style. Remember, if you are bored, so are they.

Considerations Prior to the Session

No matter how exciting or timely the concepts you are communicating, if people are uncomfortable, tired, hungry, too cold, or too hot, they will have difficulty focusing.

Therefore, experience dictates the following rules for a successful session:

- Effective facilitation means adequate preparation.
 - Spend time becoming familiar with the subject matter and the materials that support your presentation.
 - Customize the materials to address those issues that are unique to your organization.
 - Do a “dry run” to help you feel comfortable with the materials. This goes a long way in establishing yourself as a credible information source and competent presenter.
- Choose the right timeframe for your group session. You may be able to cover your content in a few hours, or you might need an entire day. If you have a lot of content to cover but find it difficult to find large chunks of time, space it over several days. Choose a time of the day that fits the flow of your business and the schedule of your participants. Your only option may be after regular work hours. No matter what, choose the format that best fits your organization.
- If you are facilitating these materials at your own location, make sure the environment is as distraction free as possible. Ask participants to arrange not to be interrupted by phone calls and other day-to-day issues. If you are facilitating these materials off-site, make sure you contact that location in plenty of time so they can make sure you are in a distraction-free environment and can accommodate the size of your group.

- “If you feed them, they will come” is an old presenter’s adage. Providing refreshments may be helpful to keep your audience focused. A break table in the back of the room, with plenty of coffee, tea, and juice is always a good option. If your session will be more than a few hours, snacks are a good idea. Keep it something simple and easy to set up. If your session is all day, definitely make refreshments part of your plan.
 - Make sure you have all the materials you need for the session.
- If using the electronic version of the PowerPoint visuals, you will also need:
 - A high intensity overhead projector
 - An LCD display panel/computer
 - A laptop computer with Power Point

PLATFORM DELIVERY SKILLS

The final component of good delivery lies in the actual platform delivery skills, or the way the information is actually delivered. Keep these tips for effective delivery in mind.

- **Speak slowly, clearly, and loudly.**
- **Speak conversationally.** Think of yourself as having a personal conversation with every person in the room.
- **Let your physical delivery help reinforce your training.**
 - Rather than roaming around, **stand in a few spots.** Move into a new spot when you incorporate a new training technique, address a new topic, etc.
 - Use your **gestures to emphasize key points.** Keep your arms at your sides and use them to highlight important information.
- **Keep your eyes on the audience.** You should maintain eye contact for at least 80% of the presentation.
 - **Use notes as a prompt.** Keep these close, but not in front of your body.
 - **Talk to the audience, not your visual aid.** Use your visuals to stay on track, but don't read from them!
- **Exude enthusiasm.** The audience will only be as excited as you are about the topic.
- **Share reference handouts at the end.** This prevents participants from flipping ahead. If you want participants to reference the material, then you will need to pass the materials out before the training. However, try to keep the number of handouts passed out to a minimum, as passing out papers can be distracting.
- **Avoid a podium.** It puts a barrier between you and the audience, and tempts distractions.

Preparing for the Presentation

As with most professional activities, preparation is the key to a successful presentation.

- Read the material prior to the presentation. As the presenter, you are the momentary expert on the material. Thus it is your responsibility to know it. It is okay to admit that you do not know something, if that material was not provided to you ahead of time.
- Review the agenda and time frame of your presentation. This allows you to identify appropriate times for breaks and discussions creating a tighter presentation.
- Identify the necessary materials (e.g., paper, pens, markers) for each and every group activity that may take place during your presentation. This preparation allows for smooth transitions from training to facilitating group activities.
- Look over the participant list to identify the appropriate tone to take with the group. Not all presentations need be serious in nature. A certain amount of playfulness will often draw uninterested participants in to the presentation. Thus knowing your group's dynamics ahead of time will allow you to plan your presentation style.
- Review the group activities and the procedures for each. Based on the aforementioned items (agenda, number of participants) identify any activities that may be inappropriate and substitute with a more appropriate activity that will accomplish the same results. Decide how you will assign particular jobs, or roles, within the activities that each group will complete.
- If you are working with a co-presenter, make sure to assign roles for each of the presenters in the facilitation of group activities. It is vital that the participants be able to identify with one person for the different needs during the presentation.

Working with Another Facilitator

Working with a colleague can often be as stressful, if not more, than facilitating a presentation alone. The secret to a good presentation with a colleague is to clearly identify the role of each presenter. Go through and identify which person is responsible for each part of the presentation, as well as who will be responsible for which role during group activities. This communication drives a great co-presentation.

Adapting an Activity that “Bombs”

Not every activity will go as planned, no matter how much preparation you made. Thus, it is key to be able to modify, or adapt, to the group if an activity fails.

If the structure of the activity is too loose, do a walk through of the activity, modeling the methods to attain the desired outcomes.

If the structure is too tight, use a debriefing session after the activity to create a learning experience, even if the confines of the activity itself did not allow for it.

If the pace of the activity is too slow, reduce the time limits. This moves the pace along forces all groups to focus and hopefully accomplish the task in a timely manner.

If the pace is too fast, place minimum time requirements on each part of the activity, forcing the participants to focus on the instructional message of the activity.

If the participants are getting bored, change the rules to create a more competitive atmosphere. Make sure to keep the instructional message in mind, not just competition.

If the competition becomes too intense, de-emphasize the scoring atmosphere and emphasize hard work and good critical thinking. Avoid comparing individual participants. It is also possible to give each individual a different goal for the activity, thus eliminating the competitive nature of direct goal achievement.

If the participants are having too much fun and not accomplishing anything, halt the progress of the activity and do a “mid-point” discussion, refocusing the group on the intended outcomes of the activity.

If you are intruding in the activity too much, create an anecdotal record of the individual's behaviors during the activity, thus making yourself an observer only. You could go ahead and begin getting ready for the next phase of the presentation, you know!

If you are being ignored by the participants, become a participant yourself and make a specific announcement to each group as you enter the activity.

Handling Disruptive Participants

Most of the fears that surround the facilitation of professional meetings are focused on the management of the participants and not the execution of the materials. The next few pages will focus on some of the major forms of disruption during presentations and offer a few strategies for overcoming the interference.

HANDLING DISRUPTIVE TALKING BEHAVIORS

- The participant talks too much.
 - Call on others
 - Interrupt the person with a question directed at another participant
 - Acknowledge the comment and involve others. “Jay, that was quite insightful. Matthew, what are your views on this issue?”
- The participant **does not talk**.
 - Direct a question to the silent participant or ask him/her to summarize the comments of another participant.
 - Have comments directed in smaller groups, like at a table or to a neighbor.
 - Have participants write responses on an index card and facilitate the discussion through the use of the cards.
- The participant talks in technical jargon.
 - Compliment the participant on his or her expertise and request a simplified version, in “laymen’s terms.”
 - Ask the other participants to explain the response to you, ensuring that everyone in the group will get a reasonable understanding of the response.
- The participant uses excessive humor.
 - Thank the participant for adding a light touch to the discussion, and request that comments directly relate to the topic.
 - Ignore the humorous comment and follow it with a serious remark.

- The participant talks in an excessively serious fashion.
 - Bring in a light tone to the conversation directly after the participant's comments.
- The participant talks to someone else on the side.
 - Politely request that the comments be shared for the benefit of all.
 - Ask one of the participants to make a direct comment about the previous remark that was being ignored.
- The participant talks only to the facilitator or trainer.
 - Emphasize that the meeting is a dialogue among all participants.
 - Avoid eye contact and move away from the participant.
 - Avoid commenting on the participant's remarks and wait for someone else to comment.

HANDLING TIME-RELATED DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIORS

- The participant behaves impatiently, not wanting to “waste time” in discussion.
 - Be specific in the time allotments for each portion of the discussion.
 - Involve the impatient participant in the discussion by soliciting his or her comments on the topic.
- The participant wastes time on off-topic discussions.
 - Ask the participant a new, directed question.
 - Ask specific questions of the other participants to redirect the discussion.
- The participant arrives late and leaves early.
 - Avoid summarizing what was missed as this only rewards the tardy nature of the participant.
 - Start on time and end on time.
- The participant is interrupted by messages, phone calls, or pages.
 - Emphasize that common courtesy would allow us to deactivate devices that will inhibit the others in the group.
 - Provide appropriate breaks for activities such as checking messages or returning calls.

HANDLING DISRUPTIVE INTERPERSONAL ISSUES

- The participant constantly seeks attention.
 - Ignore show-off comments and behaviors.
 - Interrupt the person and ask for comments or remarks from other participants.
- The participant challenges others' statements.
 - Thank the participant for playing "the devil's advocate." Suggest that he or she take on the advocacy role from time to time.
 - Draw attention to the criticism of the process not the person. Shift from personal attacks to attacks of the solution or the process.
 - Assign roles of "positive" and "negative" for the discussion and shift them every few minutes.
- The participant refuses to participate.
 - Divide the large group in to smaller groups and request that everyone take turns in the smaller groups sharing his or her comments.
 - Use index cards to elicit responses and facilitate the sharing of each person's comments.

Hopefully through employing the strategies for preparing, executing, and handling the disruptions during your presentation, you will provide a truly valuable learning experience for each participant of your presentation.