



Meeting Facilitation

October 22, 2020

Jonathan Aust, OC Chair
Margaret Albright, OC Vice Chair
Steve Ashbaker, Staff Liaison

Overview

- **You are not alone in this effort. You have a vice chair, WECC staff, and peers who can help out**
- The role of committee leadership and meeting facilitation
- Identify issues and potential solutions
- Guide issues to resolution

Facilitation Support Exists

- Committee vice chair
- WECC liaison and administrative support
- Committee Members (Topic SMEs)
- Past chairs

Role of Committee Leadership

- Represent the group. Be its voice
- Set an example of trust and integrity
- **Realize that not every resolution will be what you want, but it will be what the majority of the group wants**
- Help facilitate development of subsequent leaders
- Be the voice of reason during conflicts
- **Share committee results** with WECC leadership

The Facilitator Role

- Meeting facilitation means being a leader
- Establish group direction through consensus from the group and WECC leadership
- **Try to remain neutral during conflicts**
- Push the group forward during meetings
- **Communicate results** to staff and leadership

Communication

- Meet with vice chair and WECC staff ahead of committee meetings
- Agree on mutual goals and reasonable timelines
- Set agenda for meetings and scope out future work
- Decide who does what in the meetings
- **Understand personality differences and similarities and how those may affect meeting objectives**

Productivity

The vast majority of meetings are viewed as unproductive!

Ensure meetings are worthwhile.

- Verify topic relevance.
- Manage time and progress during your meeting.
- Follow up on action items and hold people accountable.

Facilitation Isn't Always Perfect



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C0s85huv1AE>

Key Steps to Facilitation

1. Pre-meeting preparation
2. Review meeting objectives
- 3. Engage attendees and balance participation**
4. Recognize and thank presenters
- 5. Practice active listening**
6. Develop and communicate direction
7. Provide closure

1—Pre-Meeting Preparation

- Create the agenda
- Contact and confirm outside speakers as needed
- Prepare to support online and dial-in participants
- Design an ice breaker or introductory transition appropriate to the audience
- **Update the status of your action items list**
- Review meeting purpose
- **Identify potential discussion “hot spots”**
- Plan closing and gather next meeting details

2—Meeting Objectives

- Confirm agenda with participants
- Discuss any meeting ground rules
- Request any additions or proposed modifications to the agenda
- Identify defined break and meal times so participants know they exist
- Call out any hot topics, or key discussion items
- Explain that some topics with external speakers may be shuffled based on speaker availability
- Reaffirm objectives for the day

3—Engage & Balance

- Be a leader here—ask questions and support presenters
- **Use microphones so everyone can hear**
- Ensure a nontoxic and empowering meeting environment
- Draw out positions and opinions of quieter attendees
- Recognize those who contribute toward discussions
- Try to remain neutral on topics or share that your position is based on your company and not your chair role (for that specific topic)
- **Be sure to maintain respect for others**

3—Engage & Balance cont.

- Managing conflict and disruptions can be the most draining aspects of facilitation, so have a plan for both
 - Disruptions are more easily addressed. The speaker can simply be called out tastefully, or merely bring the group back on topic by stating so to everyone
 - Ground rules up front can also help with subsequent disruptions

3—Engage & Balance cont.

- Managing conflict can be more stressful
 - When situations get tense on a topic, it may help to re-focus the group on only the contested aspects of the topic (usually 2 or 3 items max)
 - **Get agreement on those topics and only focus on them. Steer the group to those discussions only, until they are resolved**
 - Use a parking lot if those topics cannot be addressed, or identify in a separate/later meeting for those items
 - Be sure to gather all opinions as the effort moves forward. Consensus is critical

4—Recognize Presenters

- Be flexible—external speakers may have timing limitations
- Be prepared to control the presentations for them if they lack webinar access
- Acknowledge that some mic limitations may exist, and repeat key points for others
- **Watch for body language in the room to see whether the speaker is losing engagement—ask questions to maintain involvement**
- Thank the presenters for their time

5—Practice Active Listening

- Repeat key points
- Ask pertinent questions
- Engage presenters in a supportive way
- Remember that members are more than an audience, they can hash out ideas, priorities, and work on solving problems
- **Set an example for others to follow**

6—Communicate Direction

- Show next steps based on decisions made
- Identify actions and assigned parties to complete them—capture in action item list
- Lead discussions on what the direction means to members

7—Provide Closure

- Summarize the meeting just held
- Identify accomplishments
- Recognize assignments (action items)
- Close with next meeting details
- Thank everyone for their time and participation, then adjourn

Webinar meeting in real life



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu_bGbZiiQ

Webinar Meetings Etiquette

- Log in early to make sure the technology is working
- Set the expectations at the outset
 - Please mute unless you are talking
 - Turn on video when you are presenting
 - If you have a comment or question during the meeting, please raise your hand or speak into the chat

Webinar Meetings Etiquette

- Try to build in agenda items that require responses to engage meeting goers
- Take breaks often, no more than 90 minutes in between breaks
- Acknowledge speakers to prevent people speaking over one another
 - Use the raise hand or chat option, use your WECC staff to manage questions and comments
- Use technology (poll option, break-out rooms, etc.) if available to drive engagement

Wrap Up

- Know meeting goals, timing, and critical deliverables
- Recognize all positions on a topic, even those you don't share
- Make all your attendees feel important and heard
- Draw out quieter voices
 - Differing personality types do not carry less value
- Distill difficult topics to the most critical issues and focus time on them
- Don't be afraid to call people out who are stalling progression in a meeting
 - Do it in a non-threatening way
- Have fun!
 - Meeting facilitation shouldn't be stressful or difficult



Contact:

Jonathan Aust, OC Chair

Margaret Albright, OC Vice Chair

Steve Ashbaker, Staff Liaison