

The Practice of Facilitation Breakout Session
PI Conference 2007
Facilitated by James Traeger, Roffey Park on 2nd May 2007

This session looked at the key issues and challenges that individuals face when facilitating within their organisations. These should give an interesting insight into people's issue with facilitation as a topic. These issues were drawn as a mind map with importance placed on each point dependant on how many participants within the session found this relevant. The issues were as follows:

Session 1

- Group dynamics – how to deal with non attendance, internal politics, dominant/obstructive individuals, lack of participation
- Fear of failure
- Lack of support
- Meeting environment
- Boredom from participants – disengaged, tired etc.
- Not sticking to subject

Session 2

- Different levels of understanding
- Lack of clear objectives
- Implementation
- Timekeeping
- People going off the topic
- Managing group dynamic
- Time and money constraints
- Lack of cooperation
- Conflict

The group also looked at what they thought was needed to be a good facilitator and what they individually wanted to improve on. These were as follows:

- Expand communication skills
- Facilitate amongst people you don't know
- Learn to tailor skills to particular situations
- Help to present to larger groups
- Make meetings shorter and more effective
- Have a variety of approaches so that you have something different for each meeting
- Ways to get best thinking from participants
- Ensure tasks are allocated at the end of the meeting
- Get ownership of the meeting
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Break down barriers and create a more inclusive environment
- New ideas for handling group situations
- Practical knowledge, tools and skills to be used within their business environment

The group also looked at the facilitation cycle:

ORIENTATE ⇨ IDENTIFY ⇨ EXPLORE ⇨ RESOLVE