

Facilitating Problem Solving

Workshop Overview



Group problem solving in business can deliver breakthrough results – yet the most common experience when groups try to solve problems is just the opposite. Group think, politics, and flaccid thinking dog most problem solving meetings and result in decisions and solutions that don't work or are ignored by those who should implement them. This course equips group leaders with the tools and skills needed to bring out the best in groups so they can break through their blocks and create innovative, implementable solutions to business problems.

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The Learning Opportunity:

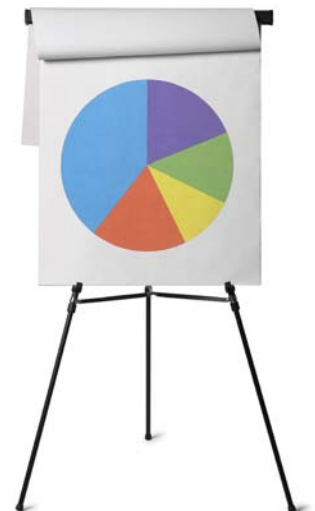
This course builds on basic facilitation skills to create advanced abilities in the design and delivery of systematic problem solving. Using a step by step approach, facilitators help groups overcome their negative tendencies (narrow solution spaces, judgements that destroy creativity, one-sided thinking) and tap their creativity, diversity and commitment. Participants see master facilitators demonstrating advanced problem solving and idea generation methods, then have the opportunity to practice these methods and receive feedback on their experience. The session uses example problems provided by the participants, so in addition to receiving training in the skills and processes of problem solving, they solve a real business problem.

Who Should Attend:

Everyone – from line managers to staff support people – solves problems in their work. So this course will appeal to almost anyone who works with others to get things done. It will have special appeal to facilitators and business analysts who lead meetings of teams to solve problems or fix processes. Managers will benefit from attending because they can then facilitate meetings of their teams to overcome blocks or design new products and services. Project leaders will find the skills and tools of this course ideal for overcoming project blocks and slow-downs. Analysts and leads of continuous improvement teams will benefit from attending because the facilitation skills taught in the course add to their suite of technical tools and approaches. Teachers/facilitators will find these skills will help them overcome blocks to creativity and participation in the classroom or in online/teleconference meetings.

Course Agenda:

- Introductions, Purpose & Outcomes
- Learning Objective & Course Map
- Creating Targeted Norms for Problem Solving
- Facilitation Flashback (key skills and processes)
- The Problem with Problems
- Six-Step Problem Solving
- Selecting a Real Problem
- Modelling the Process: Six Steps in Action
- Selecting a Practice Facilitation Topic
- Learning & Application from Day One
- Preparing to Facilitate:
 - Meeting 1: Name the Problem
 - Meeting 2: Define the Goal
 - Meeting 3: Define the Root Cause
 - Meeting 4: Brainstorm Solutions
 - Meeting 5: Prioritize & Select Solutions
 - Meeting 6: Plan & Schedule Action
- Advanced Facilitation Clinic



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Workshop Outcomes

Day One Learning Outcomes

Module One - Introduction and Review



- Clarify individual learning needs, as an aid to selecting what to learn and focusing attention
- Demonstrate the use of an icebreaker and when they are required (with special reference to the types of participants you encounter in your problem solving meetings)
- Explain six steps to follow at the beginning of a facilitation (with reference to a list)

Module Two - Systematic Problem-Solving

- Explore common pitfalls groups encounter when attempting to solve problems
- Understand the importance of creating targeted norms for problem solving
- Demonstrate one way of increasing facilitator power - and one way of increasing group power - during problem solving meetings
- Select a problem for a problem solving meeting (and understand how this process applies outside of the classroom)
- Describe the "shape" of all problem solving meetings (divergent and convergent phases)

Module Three - Six Steps of the Problem Solving Process

- List the six steps of the problem solving process, describing what happens in each step
- Explain that there are alternatives to the six step process, and when they might be used
- Capture facilitative best practices by viewing a modelling of the process: the six steps in action

Day Two Learning Outcomes

- Learning and Application from Day One

Module Four - Facilitating Problem Solving Process

- Demonstrate how to prepare to facilitate a problem solving process
- Demonstrate proper facilitation of, and receive professional and peer feedback on:
 - Meeting 1: Name to Problem
 - Meeting 2: Define the Goal
 - Meeting 3: Define the Root Cause
 - Meeting 4: Brainstorm Solutions
 - Meeting 5: Prioritize and Select Solutions
 - Meeting 6: Plan and Schedule Action
- Advanced facilitation clinic: answers to questions of relevance to you

