The article reveals the practical effectiveness of facilitation. The main methods of the facilitator work are singled out. Facilitation mechanisms are proposed, which are focused on individual motivation, comfortable work in a group, providing the opportunity to express one's opinion, and improving approaches through discussion. The main tasks of the facilitator are defined and recommendations on intensification of group work are given. It is proved that the key to facilitating the communication process is the organization of space, attracting and promoting the potential of individual students and the group as a whole, as well as supporting participants in achieving their goals. The effectiveness of the transition to facilitative methods in order to effectively establish group discussion and increase the efficiency of any group on the way to achieving goals.

Key words: facilitation, facilitative methods, group discussion, group work, communication, dialogue, discussion, comfortable space.
РОЗДІЛ І. Управління та адміністрування. 2, 2022

спікерів / тренерів / тьюторів одним з таких слів є «фасилітація». Під цим терміном розуміється супровід групового процесу, що направленний на ефективну комунікацію, прояснення та досягнення поставлених цілей. У фасилітації процесу комунікації ключовими є організація простору, залучення та сприяння розкриттю потенціалу окремих слухачів та групи в цілому, а також підтримка учасників у реалізації їхніх цілей.

Обґрунтовано ефективність переходу до фасилітативних методів з метою ефективного налагодження групової дискусії та підвищення ефективності роботи будь-якої групи на шляху до досягнення цілей. Виокремлено основні методи роботи фасилітатора. Запропоновано механізми фасилітації, які орієнтовані на індивідуальну мотивацію, комфортну роботу в групі, надання можливості висловлювати свої думки, удосконалення підходів через дискусію. Визначено основні завдання фасилітатора та надано рекомендації щодо інтенсифікації групової роботи. Доведено, що запорукою полегшення процесу спілкування є організація простору, залучення та просування потенціалу окремих слухачів і групи в цілому, а також підтримка учасників у досягненні поставлених цілей.

Ключові слова: фасилітація, фасилітативні методики, групове обговорення, робота з групою, комунікація, діалог, дискусія, комфортний простір.

Formulation of the researched problem and its significance. Nowadays, people face a huge number of different situational problems that need to be solved. The culture of group discussion is present everywhere: in politics, business, science, learning, and so on. The group discussion format allows you to quickly generate many ideas, instantly hear their evaluation, refine, find shortcomings and choose the best ones. In addition, participation in a group discussion allows a person to delve much better into the topic and listen to alternative opinions.

There are still a large number of supporters of the «dry» version of working with people. People of such views are limited to presenting the material, articulating their requirements, expecting results from completely psychologically uncoordinated and unprepared people. Obviously, then frustration and finding the causes of failure in others, not in methods of work. It is important to understand that any process of exchanging opinions can be difficult: some theses of some people can be rejected by others and lead to contradictions, which immediately makes communication destructive, some people have modest behavior and may not find enough confidence to speak, some just do not hear others, being sure of their rightness. Therefore, the most important thing in group conversations is the participation of the facilitator, a person who, without imposing his own position, can push the interlocutors to a painless and useful exchange of worldviews. First of all, you should focus on what we are talking about. Therefore, we formulate a theoretical introduction for further mutual understanding.

Facilitation is a form of group work to make decisions of increased complexity or importance. It can be used when conducting:
- creative meetings aimed at developing new solutions and approaches;
- resolving conflicts and differences;
- strategic sessions aimed at forecasting and development.

With the help of facilitation you can solve the following production and business problems:
- strategy development, goal setting and their decomposition;
- development of basic elements of corporate culture;
- discussion of the company's structure and making the necessary changes;
- making marketing decisions;
- discussion of internal processes and projects of the company;
- holding any problematic meetings, etc.

In order to be able to direct the vector of the conversation, you need trust and respect for the one who moderates it, each member of the group should feel that the facilitator does not take someone's side and ignores someone, but wants to help everyone reach mutual understanding. If we prefer the classic academic methods of conveying information and goals, then the participants in principle will not be presented with a mechanism for expressing and establishing an atmosphere of comfort, it will negatively affect all the points above. In this article, we will consider a number of important points to consider for facilitating any discussion.
Analysis of modern research. As the topic is very relevant, there is a lot of information on facilitation today. There are popular books on facilitation, such as Sam Keiner's «Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making» [1], Michael Wilkinson's «The Secrets of Facilitation» [2], and books that do not directly address the facilitation process, but provide guidance on how to improve teamwork, for example, Patrick Lencioni's «The Ideal Team Player» [3]. Most of the available sources [4; 5; 6; 7] focus on the techniques of the facilitator's interaction with the participants, where they consider the process of forming a discussion, and offer different games with the audience. In this article, we will focus more on the unobvious things that the authors have encountered during their time as moderators of discussions.

The purpose and objectives of the article. The aim of the article is to determine the features of facilitative methods as an effective means of establishing group discussion. To achieve this goal, the following tasks will be set: to clarify the essence of the concept of «facilitation»; identify and analyze the components of facilitative methods of interaction; provide advice on how to work with the group.

Presentation of the main material and substantiation of research results.

Effective methods of the facilitator. To display the best methods of the facilitator, we use a schematic image in the form of a flower (Fig.1).

![Figure 1: Methods of facilitator work](image)

The core of the flower is so-called basic methods, that is such methods without which no training is possible. Such methods include: presentation, individual work, brainstorming, as well as engines or so-called energizers. The basic methods are not accidentally depicted inside the flower, at first glance they may seem quite simple, although in fact each of them has its own technology and specifics. If the coach has little experience, it is recommended to use basic methods, and a maximum of one or two methods of «petals», described below. If the trainer has considerable experience, then the «petals» should focus more attention, because the basic methods participants are likely to have seen before and they may be less interested in them. All this will attract people, have a positive effect on their productivity and increase the likelihood of obtaining the expected result, which we certainly do not have with a simple and still common model manager-subordinate or lecturer-listener.

Petals (advanced methods of working with the audience):

- role-playing games (sometimes very different, with different goals, design and duration) and business games (methods of simulating group decision-making in situations of conflict or uncertainty);
- thematic methods are methods developed specifically for a specific training topic. As a rule, such methods are author's, but can be easily adapted and changed depending on the needs of a particular group.
- working with multimedia are methods related to engaging participants in computer interactive games or tests or watching thematic videos and movies;
- discussion methods (discussion, debate, discussion on the principle of a carousel or aquarium) - are methods that involve the free exchange of views of group members on a particular topic.
- work with experts, involvement of experts. In this case, to deepen the topic at certain points in the conversation, it is recommended to involve an expert who has been working on this topic for a long time and has a number of unique and interesting experiences for participants. As in the case of multimedia work, the involvement of an expert should be further developed in a full-fledged way (for example, joint preparation of a group of questions to the expert in advance or in-depth feedback from the coach after talking to an
expert). Working with experts requires additional time and effort, as the facilitator must instruct the expert in detail on the content of the discussion, its participants and the exact role of the expert. As a rule, these efforts are justified, the trainer and the communication manager are potentially very successful symbiosis, because the expert has a unique deep knowledge of the topic, and the multiplier is able to present them to the participants from a methodological point of view so that they are understandable and interesting:

- master classes (demonstration and training of participants in a unique skill or ability) and workshops, during which participants gain experience or knowledge independently [8, c.27].

Preparation to work with a group. The facilitator often gets to know the group during their first meeting. Practice shows that this is immediately noticeable in the further process of communication: most of the work to improve group decisions can be done before the group discussion. In order to increase the effectiveness of the strategy to achieve the desired quality of the discussion should immediately determine the following:

1. The composition of the group. At the stage of preparation for the discussion, it is recommended to identify three characteristics of the future group: homogeneity / heterogeneity in terms of knowledge and experience, stability of composition and voluntary participation. These basic parameters can have an unexpectedly significant impact on the development of intragroup relationships and motivate participants to work on increasing their productivity: for example, if you understand that the audience is very different in experience on key issues, you should encourage participants to use less complex professional words.

2. Place of discussion. Discussion is important for group decision making. To create the necessary atmosphere of the discussion, it is recommended to hold it in a comfortable and quiet place, which does not cause participants to be distracted from constructive emotions. It is desirable to ensure that people have easy access to sanitation, fresh air, and drinking water. In order for the members of the discussion group to be free to express their opinion, a working and practical option would be to seat the participants around a round table that eliminates the status differences between them. If the discussion is held among young people, instead of chairs, you can provide the audience with soft ottomans – this will create an atmosphere of comfort and ease.

3. Materials for acquaintance. In order for participants to be able to prepare for the discussion, the organizers should provide in advance the distribution of materials that reflect the objectives of the discussion, as well as additional information – abstracts of keynote speakers, statistics, etc. Having received such information, people can think about the pressure without timing pressure and at a comfortable pace for them to do and suggest solutions. The purpose of the discussion should be specific, relevant to all participants, and encouraged to express opinions. Some experts recommend involving members of the future group in its formulation. People who set goals for their own work are more motivated, better understand and accept information from experts [9].

Also before the meeting, depending on the topic of discussion, it is necessary to make a rough plan for its holding. If, for example, this is a discussion aimed at solving a particular problem, the agenda may be as follows:

- participants understand the content of the problem they are trying to solve and share key knowledge about it;
- determine the minimum requirements for possible solutions and evaluation criteria;
- offer solutions, consider alternatives;
- correlate these alternatives with the evaluation criteria;
- choose an alternative that has the maximum number of desired characteristics.

If the discussion does not require a solution to a problem, but an example of planning the development of the company, you can use such a plan.

1. Formulation of key issues. What would we like to improve? What results would we like to get?
2. Focus on discussion. What is our situation now? What are the key issues hindering our growth?
3. Generation of ideas and development of ideas of other speakers.
4. Clustering of ideas. We divide ideas into groups and give them names.
5. Evaluation of ideas. You can evaluate the potential effectiveness of the idea, its creativity, as far as it is possible to implement.
6. Roadmap to implementing ideas into reality.

The above are just examples, the plan may be very different from the purposes for which the people gathered. But preliminary preparation will help to plan time competently, not to dwell on certain stages of discussion and get the result in the end.

Discussion of unique information. A significant problem of group discussion is information loss: people pay more attention to one piece of information than another. You can significantly reduce these losses using the following techniques:

- careful recollection and discussion of information. You can use two procedures for this. During the first, each group member is asked to take turns to present one argument in favor of each alternative, regardless of which solution they like. In the second case, group members are asked to list as much information as they can and summarize it. Both procedures increase the likelihood of using unique information;

- presence in the group of specialists. Groups are more likely to discuss unique information when they have people with experience in solving relevant problems. They are the ones who most often pay attention to important information that only some members of the group have;

- minority activity. An active minority increases the likelihood of discussing unique information, as it may have a view of the problem that differs sharply from the majority;

- activity of the leader. A significant contribution to eliminating the dominance of one information over another can be made by the group leader, who asks questions and repeats the unique information he hears [9].

In this way, it intensifies the discussion of information that is known only to some participants, and ensures their influence on the group decision.

Reducing the scattering of responsibilities. A significant problem in group discussion is the frequent refusal of participants to take personal responsibility for what happens. To overcome the diffusion of responsibility, it is possible to neutralize the factors that cause it and to ensure that each participant understands his role and feels responsible for the group decision:

- before starting work, clearly define the rights, responsibilities and powers of all participants;

- each participant is informed what result is expected of him and what criteria for performance evaluation;

- before and during the work emphasize the importance and complexity of the problem under discussion;

- emphasizes the importance of each participant’s contribution and its competence;

- good relations between the representatives of the group are encouraged, respect for them is shown;

- an individual contribution to the discussion of each group member is recorded [9].

Reducing the dispersion of responsibilities helps to increase the willingness of each speaker to justify his opinion, which generally increases the constructiveness of the discussion.

Dialogue, not controversy. One of the most important tasks of the facilitator during group work is to prevent productive discussion from turning into a destructive argument. This is a thing that needs to be controlled from the very beginning of the event until the very end. Even small probable differences of opinion are often a catalyst for a gradual increase in misunderstanding and the emergence of mutual aggression. People tend to think and speak subjectively, not to listen to opposition views. The facilitator must constantly monitor the situation and quickly adjust the vector of the conversation if he sees that it escalates into a quarrel.

Below is a table that will help you to both the facilitator and the speakers on whether the discussion is going right.

Questions as a method of improving the discussion. The facilitator’s main task is not to impose his own opinion, but to help the participants hear each other. Therefore, the most important thing is not to implement theses, but to ask questions. Thanks to constant questions, the group is always active, each participant
understands that at some point he may be asked, in addition, questions give the group members a sense that the facilitator is really interested in what they say and tries to delve into the idea or information.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features of group / individual behavior options in the discussion process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dispute</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The goal is to win the dispute, prove the correctness of one’s own views and the inferiority of the opponent’s views.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is necessary to listen to others to find errors in the argument and show its imperfections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People criticize other people's experience as meaningless and distorted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The participant takes the image of a person who is absolutely confident in their views and not ready to correct them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong emotions are used to put pressure on the interlocutor and make him feel wrong.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: created by the authors.

Here are some tips to keep in mind:
- think about the purpose for which the question is asked. Do not parasitize on questions that do not help to reveal the topic, otherwise the participants will lose interest in the discussion;
- the question should be clear to the whole audience;
- short questions are better than long ones. It is best practice to ask a few short questions at intervals than one long one;
- you should not ask several questions in a row. This will defocus the person, and she will hardly remember the questions that were in the beginning;
- if the question is addressed to a specific person, it is better to address him by name. When an appeal goes by name, the person feels that it matters to the person appealing and will be more interested in answering;
- control the intonation by asking questions. It is better if the intonation of your voice is friendly;
- if you have not received an answer to your question, rephrase it and ask again [10].

If you want to hear the opinion of several people on the same question, you should first ask it to the least competent and least self-confident people and gradually turn to more and more authoritative. If you first ask a person with strong leadership qualities or a person who has significant baggage in the topic under discussion, other people under the pressure of authority will try to adjust their answers so as not to look clumsy in their background.

Creating a comfortable space. To create a comfortable atmosphere, it is important to remember that all participants are human and have biological needs. It is best practice to find common needs, if everyone (or the absolute majority) agrees to implement certain measures for everyone. The process of finding common needs has significant benefits for the group:
- creation in the end of the order of work comfortable for all;
- the facilitator trusts the ability of the group to find solutions that improve their further interaction;
- the group learns to cooperate together and find compromises;
individual responsibility for one’s position is formed, in a situation when its defense is fundamentally important for the actor.

In an ideal case, the participants come to an agreement and the facilitator’s task is only to listen to them and individually consider the opinions they did not listen to. If the participants do not compromise, or the facilitator understands that they are ashamed, or for other reasons do not express needs, you can use ready-made solutions:

- introduction of additional breaks;
- temporary change of place (for example, the group goes out into the fresh air);
- changing the form of the task (for example, working in a group instead of a big discussion);
- change the order of tasks. Some parts of the task can even be excluded and set for homework.

Work with inactive participants. Some participants may, for various reasons, refuse to share their views in front of the whole group, when it is necessary to do so orally and in front of everyone. They may be afraid to look smart, or not find the courage to disagree with the loudest or most active members of the group. The more participants take an active part in the work of the group - the better for everyone. If individuals are silent and closed, they themselves will benefit much less from the process, will not let others hear what may be important and interesting, and may create an uncomfortable atmosphere. That the exchange of views was complete and honestly, we need to closely monitor the behavior of less active participants. It is possible to understand that a person wants to say something, but does not find courage by body language. For example, if a person sits in a closed position, but often moves his eyebrows, opens his mouth (but does not make sounds), presses the corners of his lips, or shakes his head – these are symbols that a person has his own position on the subject of discussion but does not express it. This situation is very difficult – we need to clearly understand what we should do when we know that some participants do not agree with the majority, but do not express their objections. The worst thing that can be done is to directly incite this person to speak. There is a good chance that she will agree with everything and does not want to say anything, but the worst thing is that from now on she will perceive the facilitator not as a friend who helps to communicate more comfortably, but as an enemy that can unexpectedly make you in a very awkward situation. Such a person will feel tense and the value of the discussion for her will fall sharply.

In order to find out the opinion of less active and closed participants, the following methods should be used:

1) use anonymous expression of ideas, for example, on sheets of paper, and then read them. Next, you can try to develop a small discussion on each idea, which will allow a person to be heard and encourage the expression of opinions;

2) ask simple questions to inactive participants about the topic under discussion. Even if the answer was short, make it interesting, mention it as important. The fact that the facilitator (who is an authority for the group) pays attention to it, helps to feel like a full participant in the discussion to which they listen;

3) introduce other ways of making decisions besides public speeches, such as voting cards, stickers, and raising hands. This will allow the person to be in the comfort zone, but at the same time he will be more motivated to listen;

4) during the reflection, remember the ideas expressed outside the context of the person who told them, and invite them to express themselves again. If one of the participants was silent because he did not want to argue with another, now it will be much easier for him to do so.

Conclusions and prospects for further research. The article is written in order to systematize and clearly identify not completely obvious practical methods and approaches in building communication within a particular group, to share the acquired practice in order to invest in the development of the discussed area.

All the methods and recommendations that you can find in the article tested in practice and widely used in the usual facilitation practices, while encouraging the search for new ideas and solutions. This work will be a source of inspiration for both experienced moderators and beginners in the field of group communication.

It also clearly outlines the definition of such a new concept as «facilitator» and argues the relevance of the application of its practical reflection, illustrating the analysis of group psychology.

Also in the article, this method of organizing communication in the team is opposed to the usual option to work with people only on business protocol and within the information that must be transmitted in the
work process. In today’s world, everyone is beginning to accept people not only as an unnamed audience, a workforce, or subordinates. We are gradually coming to an individual approach and understanding of its effectiveness. All the above proposed mechanisms are focused on individual motivation, comfortable work in a group, a sense of «sensitivity», providing the opportunity to express their views, and improving approaches through discussion. It sharpens ideas, objectives, goals and provides exactly the integrated approach that is lost in purely professional communication within work responsibilities. The article encourages the transition to facilitative methods for effective group discussion in order to increase the efficiency of any group on the way to achieving goals.

**Sources and literature**


**References**


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