

beyond... the mbh newsletter



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Editorial

Facilitation – related to the French facile meaning easy as I understand – well yep that stacks up. So how can we facilitate our lives? This month we uncover a powerful approach to accelerating initiatives along a smoother road to success.

In the age of increasing competition and performance measurement the business world is more than ever under increasing pressure to deliver more for less. There is a growing trend towards using specialist resources in key areas and at key times to enhance overall performance; the use of professional facilitators to orchestrate superior performance from groups of people is becoming widely accepted as the best way of securing high quality outcomes.

A facilitator in the business world is an adaptive soul – with a broad knowledge of the commercial world along with a good understanding of human behaviour and group dynamics. He or she acts as a conductor – whilst not producing actually delivering the performance, the facilitator works to ensure the performance flows and all players are playing from the same song-sheet. The facilitator sets the tone, keeps everyone in time and ensures the performance lives up to the high expectations of the audience. The facilitator utilises the much misunderstood ‘workshop’ as his/her concert hall; key stakeholders of an initiative are brought together in this organised but flexible framework to deliver on pre-determined outcomes against pre-determined constraints or parameters. As participants bring their knowledge and expertise (in addition to their gripes and opinions) the facilitator sets to work on the group, drawing out the knowledge and managing the disagreements and conflicts to deliver a well informed and well contested solution to the business issue at hand.

At mbh we have fully embedded the facilitated workshop into our services offering as a powerful medium for delivering and embedding Managing by Project for our clients. **mbh consulting** offers a suite of [purpose built workshops](#) ranging from two hours to two days duration, delivering a number of key functions from project initiation and risk management, to stakeholder management and communications.

If you wish to know more please call us on (02)95703160 or visit our website <http://www.mbh.com.au>

Au revoir!!

Feature article – Art of Facilitation

Dilemma: How do you involve a large number of people in a decision making process, get their ideas and opinions, resolve their issues and gain their buy-in without causing great frustration and/or boring them to tears?

Do you 1, hold weeks of meetings with individuals or small groups, gaining their input, validating it with the next group, before returning to the first group with the amendments from second only to find the first disagree with what the second group had to say.....and so on in a lengthy and disruptive cycle? or;

Do you 2, condense time and expand the quality of your output, by bringing all those with an interest and/or influence together at a single point in time to cross-fertilise ideas, and accelerate decision making towards successfully achieving a specific outcome?

For those of us who do not have a bottomless pit of time and \$\$\$s we should now be looking for a proven mechanism to deliver option 2; a solution that can deliver quality outcomes to complex situations in a short burst of time and energy. This mechanism is the **facilitated workshop**.

The ABC of Facilitation

Accelerated decision making

“a 'wish' changes nothing. A 'decision' changes everything!”

How often are dreams or goals lost through procrastination or indecision. Pro-activity gives way to fire-fighting as we attempt to claw back what we previously had within our grasp. A facilitated workshop is carefully designed to ensure decisions are made towards pre-set objectives. The facilitator's job is to ensure these decisions are made within the time allocated, leaving participants to concentrate on the problem in hand.

Building commitment through involvement

“Every truth has two sides; it is well to look at both, before we commit ourselves to either” (Aesop)

A facilitated workshop brings those involved in an initiative together up-front to share knowledge and experience to agree on a way forward. The role of facilitator is to ensure the dynamics of the group are managed effectively to ensure the highest quality outcomes are delivered. Participants are encouraged to contribute and challenge in the live environment, managed by our expert facilitators, to translate experience and expertise into high quality and demonstrable outcomes.

Condensing time, improving quality

“A meeting is an event at which the minutes are kept and the hours are lost”

A facilitated workshop is a framework specifically designed to allow a group of people to work effectively together to achieve a specific outcome. By compacting a series of meetings into one managed workshop time is saved whilst the quality of decisions is massively increased through the ability to draw on the knowledge and expertise of participants.

The facilitated workshop

By combining the delicate art of facilitation with the robust discipline of a workshop framework, we have an extremely powerful tool to accelerate successful delivery of high quality outcomes.

What is a facilitated workshop about?

about...	not about....
generating ideas involving people gaining commitment to courses of action identifying and selecting preferred options building teams	giving surprises persuading people changing peoples views dictating behaviour focussing on individuals

Where is it appropriate to use a facilitated workshop?

Whether setting a company vision, bashing out a strategy, addressing a specific problem or collecting requirements for a new IT system, this highly flexible framework can be applied to any situation where a decision needs to be made and agreed by a number of people. Facilitated workshops can last from a couple of hours to a few days and usually involve from 5 to 15 people.

Facilitated workshops available through mbh

At [mbh facilitated workshops](#) are a fundamental part of our strategic Managing by Proeject approach. We help secure successful outcomes to business initiatives through our suite of carefully designed and professionally executed workshops.

The workshops featured below are available individually or as a program of activity towards achieving project success:



For full details on the facilitated workshops above, and the range of services available from **mbh**, please visit our website <http://www.mbh.com.au> or e-mail us at mbh@mbh.com.au.