



FACILITATOR TRAINING GUIDE

Facilitators! this is your guide during the design challenge process. As a facilitator, your participation is critical to the event. You will lead participants as they journey creatively through the challenge. This guide:

- Outlines the responsibilities of a successful facilitator, touching on common challenges and important team behaviours;
- Highlights common group behaviours and intervention strategies;
- Provides techniques and tips to facilitation that will be useful to help participants fully engage.

What is a design challenge?

A design challenge is a collaborative and creative process that brings together people from diverse backgrounds to develop innovative solutions to complex problems. Over an intensive period of brainstorming and guided discussion, multidisciplinary teams generate solutions in response to a particular challenge. Participants are encouraged to use systems and design thinking techniques to gain new perspectives that generate unique results.

What is a facilitator?

To facilitate means “to make an action or process easy.” As a facilitator, your job is to make the workshop process easier for the participants. Your main job is to help your team improve their effectiveness by helping to create a positive team culture and by guiding them through the design challenge. Essentially, you’re going to help keep them on track and help participants more fully explore and articulate their ideas.

It’s critical to remember that a facilitator manages the method of the design challenge, rather than the content. Facilitators are concerned with how decisions are made instead of what decisions are reached. You will engage the participants in brainstorming exercises, have regular check-ins, consolidate information, identify patterns, reach consensus and guide design - all of which ensures that your team’s concept unifies in a final presentation. You will contribute ideas, knowledge, and other skills as necessary. Remember, the challenge is meant to be fun!!

As facilitator your role is to:

- focus on the group dynamics
- help the group be comfortable with ambiguity and information overload
- process emotional reactions
- focus exclusively on process rather than content
- guide your group in the management and organization of their creative content - grouping, finding patterns and common themes
- leverage your team members individual strengths and interests
- help the group develop so they can ultimately work without your input and guidance
- ensure they complete the work within the time constraints

Modeling constructive behaviour includes:

- cooperation
- inspiration
- harmony
- courage
- trust in the process

The next section will identify some common types of challenging team behaviours, along with strategies to help turn things around should issues arise.



FACILITATOR TRAINING GUIDE

Before you start, take time to introduce yourself, understand the expectations of each team member, and establish rapport and credibility. By clarifying the ground rules at the beginning, you help set common expectations for the group and may prevent destructive behaviour from emerging. If someone is disruptive, at first, you may decide NOT to intervene; it's important not to overreact in groups. You may find the best strategy is to ignore isolated moments of non-productive behaviour.

If intervention feels appropriate, first listen and repeat back what your teammate has communicated so they feel heard. Address the behaviour as a concern for the whole group. Remind everyone that we need to work collaboratively and respectfully. If necessary, you can break your team into smaller groups to tackle the task that was disrupted. Finally, if the destructive behaviour repeats, speak to the participant during the break and ask them to clarify their interest in working collaboratively with the rest of the team.

If more than one member of the group is feeling frustrated, encourage them to discuss how they feel about being stuck; shifting the emotional response temporarily to the process of how to define the problem, establish criteria or make a decision.

Destructive Behaviour	Intervention Strategy
Dominate: takes up time expressing self-views and opinions.	Shift the focus of the dominator by asking them to work with a partner or allow a chance for other teammates to participate.
Rush: encourages the group to move on before the task is complete.	Recognize the work that's been completed. Refer back to the instructions and remind the whole group of the process, and suggest that more time needs to be spent more fully developing ideas and concepts.
Withdraw: removes self from discussions or decision-making.	Request this teammate take on a new role as your assistant taking notes or aggregating sticky notes, involving them in the process in a new, less threatening way until they are more comfortable.
Discount: disregards or minimizes ideas or suggestions.	Remind the group there's no limit to creativity and there are no bad ideas.
Digress: rambles, tells stories and takes group time away from the objective.	Thank the participant for their input. Remind everyone of the need to stay on track and on time. Restate your objective and suggest that sharing is done in a way that respects the design challenge and time limitations.
Block: impedes group progress by obstructing ideas and suggestions.	Suggest your teammates agree to "build" not "block" on each others ideas. This is about the process! To complete the challenge, ideas need to be encouraged rather than obstructed.



FACILITATOR TRAINING GUIDE

Brainstorming

Brainstorming helps people generate loads of ideas really quickly. The goal is to create a huge number of ideas to pick from later. Don't waste time on elaboration or evaluation at this stage. Come up with ideas fast, record them and keep going to come up with even more new ideas!

Tools

1. Far Out

Take a safe idea and push it to the extremes: the wilder and crazier the better! Don't discard or discount any ideas at this stage, no matter how unrealistic they seem. A wild idea can be pulled back to create a moderate idea much more imaginatively than a safe idea can be pushed in the other direction.

2. 100 Ideas

Factor the number of people in your group into 100. So if you have 10 people, the factor is 10. Ask each group member to come up with 10 ideas and record each idea on one sheet of letter paper in large type, no more than 50 words per idea. For a bonus, add a sketch to the idea.

3. Archotyping

What are you really trying to design? Jump scale and get to the deeper meaning: instead of trying to design a better chair, think about what a chair really means. Break the design challenge down to its basic archetype and consider the act of sitting or at a more basic level, the human need for rest.

Tips!

Stay Positive

No matter how terrible an idea sounds, don't waste time debating or criticizing during the brainstorming session. Sometimes what seem like terrible ideas at first, inspire the very best concepts later on.

Keep a Record

Record every idea and post them up for review later. Write neatly and BIG! Use short and catchy phrases and use diagrams and sketches to illustrate your ideas. If someone else is talking and you can't wait to share the idea, grab a marker and jot it down for yourself.

Focus on Quantity

Generate as many ideas as you can. Emphasize quantity, remember there are no wrong answers during this phase.

Combination is Key

Look for ways that ideas can be combined to make unique ideas. Identifying unlikely combinations is often a key to great innovation.

Build, Don't Block

It's important to build on ideas and encourage creativity amongst team members. Challenges are not about blocking or shutting-down emerging ideas. Further refinement of ideas will happen later in the design process. In this phase, refinement will take away from the goal of creating as many ideas as possible.

Building consensus

With lots of ideas, it's critical for the facilitator to build consensus. This may mean that individuals on the team may need to shift their thinking from what they want to what's best for the team. Consensus can be reached only once each member of the group can say "it's not about preferring this decision. I support our decision because we arrived at it together and it's the best solution for us to build upon at this time because it addresses the problems we identified."

Your job as facilitator is to promote consensus building by making the team's agreement process clear and explicit.

Support for you

Throughout the design challenge process, facilitators can request for support at anytime. We're excited that you will play a key role in helping to empower participants as they tackle this challenge. We promise you'll experience a day full of hard work, creativity and laughter. Thank you for your participation in this initiative!