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# Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES  
FOR YOU TO USE OR PASS ON TO YOUR CLIENTS

## Helping you achieve your business goals in 2019

### What is the AIBEF?

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that “a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.” The AIBEF was largely the vision of Dr John Bailey who became the first President of the Association and now a Life Member.

To establish the high standard of skills required for enterprise facilitation, Members of the AIBEF are required to undertake a training course in small business counselling and related business skills and complete over two hundred hours of structured counselling sessions. *(More information can be found on our website: [www.aibef.org.au](http://www.aibef.org.au))*

### Mission:

The purpose of the AIBEF is to advance the profession of business and enterprise facilitation.

### Values of the Institute

As AIBEF member enterprise facilitation professionals we value the:

- Pursuit of excellence in business & enterprise facilitation
- Commitment to professional and ethical standards
- Contribution of our members
- The successes of our members
- Sustainability of business & enterprise facilitation outcomes
- Free exchange of ideas
- Continuing professional development of members
- Success of members

*A company is only as good  
as its people, their ability to  
deliver, and the promises  
they keep.*

### Certified Master Business and Enterprise Facilitator

The title **Certified Master Business and Enterprise Facilitator** is the hallmark of excellence in Business and Enterprise Facilitation. It illustrates to the world, that you are the consummate professional, and that you have achieved the premier National qualification and certification available to professionals in the industry.

The assessment process evaluates your current skills and knowledge and your overall competencies, and once obtained, this certification will set you apart from all other facilitators.

This certification will illustrate to your clients your exceptional competence, and they will know that you will provide integrity, skills, knowledge and trust in all your business and enterprise relations.

*For more information send an email to [info@aibef.org.au](mailto:info@aibef.org.au).*



## Corporate Psychopaths Do you have one in your business?



I guess most of us at some time or another have worked in an organization with someone who had an innate ability to 'kiss up and kick down', seemingly without the boss being aware of their actions. The important thing for us as owners and managers is to be able to recognize these individuals, and take action before they undo all the effort we have put into building a good corporate culture.

After all they can appear to us to be highly motivated operators who get things done, and are therefore much more likely to be rewarded than removed.

### So what is a Corporate Psychopath?

Robert Hare, a Professor from the University of British Columbia is thought to be one of the first to use the term in an address to the Harvard Business School, when he compared the similarity of some of the personality traits of the heads to some of the world's largest corporations to those of serial killers and other kinds of violent criminals.

It seems that around 1% of the general population isn't burdened by conscience. Given that our general prison population is less than this figure, and would include a significant proportion who are incarcerated for other reasons such as substance abuse, it is reasonable to expect that many will be found in the business world. Indeed they are likely to excel there.

In general, psychopaths have a profound lack of empathy, but

possess an astounding ability to fake it. They seduce their victims with charm that masks their true nature as pathological liars, master con artists, and heartless manipulators.

Easily bored, they crave constant stimulation, so they seek thrills from real-life 'games' they can win – and take pleasure from their power over other people.

"These are callous, cold-blooded individuals," Hare said. "They don't care that you have thoughts or feelings. They have no sense of guilt or remorse."

You'll find them in any organization where, by the nature of their position, they have power and control over other people and the opportunity to get something." Organizational chaos provides both the necessary stimulation for psychopathic thrill seeking and sufficient cover for manipulation and abusive behavior.

Hare contends that the lack of remorse or guilt; shallow affect (a coldness covered up by dramatic emotional displays that are actually play-acting); and failure to accept responsibility for their own actions. Sound like anyone you know?

The damage this type of person can do to your organization is enormous, both in terms of staff retention and in dealing with your clients.

The unfortunate thing is that you as the business owner will probably not know and will find them to be both charming and a high performer, at least until you become their next target.

Indeed, you'll probably find yourself ☒

promoting them ahead of their peers.

### How can I avoid the fallout?

In the end it's all a question of risk management, and I don't really think we can completely eliminate the possibility of ending up with a corporate psychopath in our team.

However, I think there are three major actions we can take to minimize the risk:

The first is to use tools such as psychometric testing prior to appointment, to minimize the risk and potentially inviting one of these individuals into the fold, particularly into a position of influence.

Secondly, 360 degree feedback mechanisms may assist to highlight emerging concerns amongst team members and fellow workers; and,

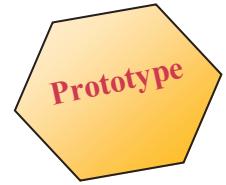
Thirdly, if corporate psychopaths thrive in organizational chaos, having in place a strong philosophy of structure, systems and measurement may well be your best defence against firstly attracting them, and secondly retaining their interest.

Remember they are easily bored and crave constant stimulation, so if you demand constant accountability and performance against all the objectives of your business, they may seek out an easier target.

After all, there are plenty of other businesses out there that might not be as organized as yours.



# Facilitating For New Opportunities, Products, Services



Even in today's "tricky" climate, there is still an abundance of ideas and opportunities that exist for the astute operator.

Your skill -as a Business Facilitator- is to know the difference between a potentially viable opportunity and a "no-go".

How do you initially assess the viability of the product or service, or the potential of this opportunity when the entrepreneur makes their first appointment to see you?

Invariably, the client is excited and optimistic when they first walk in your door. And, if you assess the project or potential opportunity as simply being no damn good, how do you let the client down easy?

An opportunity is an exploitable situation or condition which the small business entrepreneur can turn into increased sales, profit or competitive edge through some marketing planning or action.

The entrepreneur may be an existing business, for example, a pipe manufacturer. Your client has an idea to change the production process which could increase production by 10%, and ... you know that he needs to be able to be flexible.

Flexibility and the speed with which changes can be put into effect is one of the key competitive advantages of the small business, and being flexible and willing to change is half the secret.

Gaining experience in any field is a process of trial and error, and a

big mistake is often being too cautious to the extent where *'nothing ventured is truly nothing gained'*

In many ways the whole principle of investment in small business is a calculated and controlled risk.

To survive in a competitive business environment your client must be prepared to innovate and take risks. And often, sourcing a new product or service is a process of trial and error.

The trial and error principle is especially important in marketing where new ideas are essential to increase sales in any business.

The small business entrepreneur who can arrange his / her commitments to either think through or trial the options, plan new products, or experiment and work at anticipating shifts in consumer demands, is in a much stronger competitive position - simply because he / she can react much quicker to changes in the market place.

Efficient small business management quite often requires a quick response. Some ideas will win and some ideas will fail.

This simply means that any experimental "push" into a new market must be extensively planned to minimise any potential loss.

This is usually where the Business Facilitator works with their client on a Risk Management Plan - I call it a "What If" Plan.

The small business entrepreneur who does not evolve with the industry marketplace, runs a serious risk of soon becoming extinct.

Innovation needs to be high on the list of the small business marketing

opportunities.

As a guide to where new opportunities may arise or become available, the Business Facilitator might examine some of the following areas:

- Product advantage
- Changing lifestyle of the target market
- Changing lifestyle of the peripheral market
- Emerging technology
- Market coverage
- Discovery of new applications
- Improvement in service facilities
- Cost/price vulnerability

## Why a thorough evaluation is necessary

This is sometimes the "tricky" aspect for the Facilitator, because only a very small percentage of new ideas or products will ever make it to the marketplace. It may evolve through appropriate and thorough research that the project:

- will not work in the real world
- has no market
- lacks a viable plan for development and commercialization
- cannot be produced at a competitive price
- lacks people with inadequate knowledge of the market and competitors lacks the capital to advance it to the stage where it will be marketable.







# What Makes An Exceptional Facilitator?



What makes for an excellent facilitator? What personal qualities do top facilitators possess that separate them from the good facilitator? Is it more the training or the inner qualities? Is it more the facilitating technique or the artistry? Is it more facilitating knowledge or its application? Is it more natural talent for helping people or cultivated abilities?

Whilst there probably is no one single attribute that all excellent facilitators possess, exceptional facilitators do have one thing in common: They all connect with their clients, they know how to make changes with them and they know how to get results. Bottom line, they get the work done.

This current article, “*What Makes an Exceptional Facilitator*”, attempts to identify a number of the common traits and skills that are prevalent in many practitioners.

Whether you see yourself as a Business and/or Enterprise Coach, Mentor, Advisor, Trainer, Consultant or Facilitator, (*and for the purpose of this article, we will use the title “Facilitator” for all of the above*) knowing how you can be a better facilitator is the key. Being a good facilitator is an acquired talent and skill; being an Exceptional Facilitator is more than that, it's an art form, and in reality it's a talent in which very few people excel.

To be an effective facilitator, not only do you need to learn how to

communicate well and help others to get results, you need to guide, motivate and inspire others to reach their full potential.

According to [Karen Williams](#), a great facilitator is likely to have the following talents or qualities:

- **A sound understanding of facilitating philosophies:**

There is no foolproof, perfect Facilitator's model for any of us to follow religiously to be an exceptional Facilitator, but having an understanding of the facilitating frameworks and transformational questions is a good place to start. When you have a sound understanding of the philosophies of facilitating, you'll recognise the principles that exist in an effective facilitating conversation.

- **The ability to communicate well**

We can all say we communicate well, although as a facilitator, less is more. A great facilitator listens more than he or she speaks, reflects the client's language back to them (NLP), recognises the importance of silence, and builds rapport with ease. An exceptional facilitator is non-directive, non-judgemental, and observant of what is and is not said by their clients. The skills of being able to empathise and put yourself in your client's shoes are also very important.

- **Be an effective motivator**

Being positive, proactive and an effective motivator are important parts of being a great facilitator, as you'll need to encourage your clients to get great results. If they fail to deliver their agreed actions or don't do something

that is important to them, you may need to reflect this back to them. To be a great facilitator, you need to be able to inspire, support, challenge, and lead by example, and also encourage your clients to celebrate their successes.

- **Be committed towards results**

You don't need to know the ‘*life and times*’ of your clients intimately to help them to get the outcomes they desire. But you do need to be committed towards helping them to achieve results. You can then both measure the outcomes and how they impact on the bottom line, whether this is financial or a softer measure.

- **The ability to take your skills into any situation**

Being an exceptional facilitator is important in a formal one-to-one setting, but it is equally important to be able to play the same role with a small group as well as a larger group, or even an entire community. Taking these skills into other situations will cultivate and build relationships.

[Bill Cole](#) believes: “*Whether you take a facilitating approach into a training environment, use your talents to facilitate a meeting, guide a client in establishing a new enterprise, assist them with developing business plans, feasibility studies, or financial forecasts, or help a group establish a co-operative, facilitating is a way of life, a technique that gets great results.*”





Australasian Institute of  
Business and Enterprise Facilitators

## Is Your Business Advisor Qualified, Accredited, Experienced and Officially Recognised as an Expert in their Field?

**WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?**  
*Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.*



*“Business Facilitation and Coaching has copped its fair share of flak in recent years, primarily because the industry has a reputation for attracting spruikers and touts.”*

*Denise McNabb Sydney Morning Herald*

- Accountant
- Advisor
- Bookkeeper
- Coach
- Commercial Property Advisor
- Consultant
- Counsellor
- Dispute Resolution
- Financial Advisor
- H. R. Professional
- Industrial Psychologist
- Insurance Advisor
- Investment Advisor
- IT Consultant
- Lawyer
- Mentor
- Trainer
- Web Designer
- WHS Specialist

..... These are just a few of the qualified professionals and industries who, either directly or indirectly provide advice, facilitation and support to Australian Small and Medium business, organisations and communities.

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*The business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor or consultant.*

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (AIBEF) is the Peak Body for Business and Enterprise Facilitation and Facilitators in Australia and New Zealand, and was founded in 1997 as a result of the recommendations of the National Industry Task Force on Leadership and Management Skills. In their report, entitled **Enterprising Nation**, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

- All AIBEF members have **formally recognised credentials** (accreditation) that recognise their professional reputation and credibility as suitably accredited, skilled and ethical business and enterprise facilitator practitioners.
- AIBEF members are recognised through the use of the respected AIBEF **post-nominals** that convey member status as a professional to be trusted – someone to build a relationship with.
- AIBEF **membership includes many of the best respected enterprise facilitator professionals** involved with business and enterprise facilitation and related support services.
- The AIBEF represents the business and enterprise facilitator profession at **all levels of enterprise** – including private commercial businesses; not-for-profit organisations; government corporate entities and departments of state.

*Look for the AIBEF Accreditation with your Advisor, and you know that you have an experienced Professional who is a qualified and recognised expert in their industry.*

# Welcome to “Facilitation Focus”

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In their report, entitled *Enterprising Nation*, the taskforce recommended that: “.... a comprehensive accreditation process be established for small business trainers, educators, counsellors, mentors and advisers so as to upgrade the quality of small business advice.”

It's a fact that, at the moment, the business advice industry in Australia is self-regulated, and virtually anyone can call themselves a business or enterprise facilitator, advisor, coach, mentor, trainer or consultant.

Check out Google for instance; there must be a dozen (or more) sites on “*How To Start Your Own Business Consulting Venture*”.

The AIBEF is the Peak Body for Business Mentors, Coaches and Trainers, and we, the AIBEF Committee, hope to continue the association's great work to further promote the professionalism and quality of our members, and to endeavour to act as a respected voice and advocate for the wider community.

The AIBEF represents a profession that is proud of its independence and confident of the service it provides, committed to continual improvement in the skills and knowledge of our members and Business and Enterprise Facilitators in general, who ably assist in the professional guidance and support of business, enterprise and community development.



## Welcome to our Newsletter

*Facilitation Focus* is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Mentors, Trainers and Consultants to ask questions, offer answers, and become part of a group where we can all join in peer-to-peer discussions and conversations about challenges, experiences and outcomes. ***It is also worth noting that ‘Focus’ can be included in your Continuing Professional Development (CPD)***

*Facilitation Focus* is a publication for a rapidly changing world.

Almost daily, SME's are facing constant changes, and it is vital that the Business and Enterprise Facilitator is current with their expert advice and guidance.

*Facilitation Focus* has as its main aim to access to a professional network of peers through the AIBEF, and by gaining more insight into business and industry best practices, as well as increasing the focus on the important aspects of their own business, an AIBEF Focus member can accomplish amazing results.



## Something To Say?

Letters and Article contributions from readers are most welcome

Please send your letters to [info@aibef.org.au](mailto:info@aibef.org.au)



## WHO ARE BUSINESS OR ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS?

Virtually any professional, qualified person or organisation involved in assisting entrepreneurs, organisations, or communities to improve their Skills; Knowledge; Business; Staff; and/or Life.

The role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator is to promote local economic growth by providing support to local entrepreneurs, groups or entire communities wishing to start or expand a small business enterprise or to assist to develop a concept where the community will benefit

The concept of Business and Enterprise Facilitation is a model of development that supports the creation of wealth from within a community by nurturing the resourcefulness of its people.

The Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators is an international not-for-profit institution that works with entrepreneurs, small groups and / or communities to establish sustainable, grassroots enterprise projects.

For more information please contact:

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