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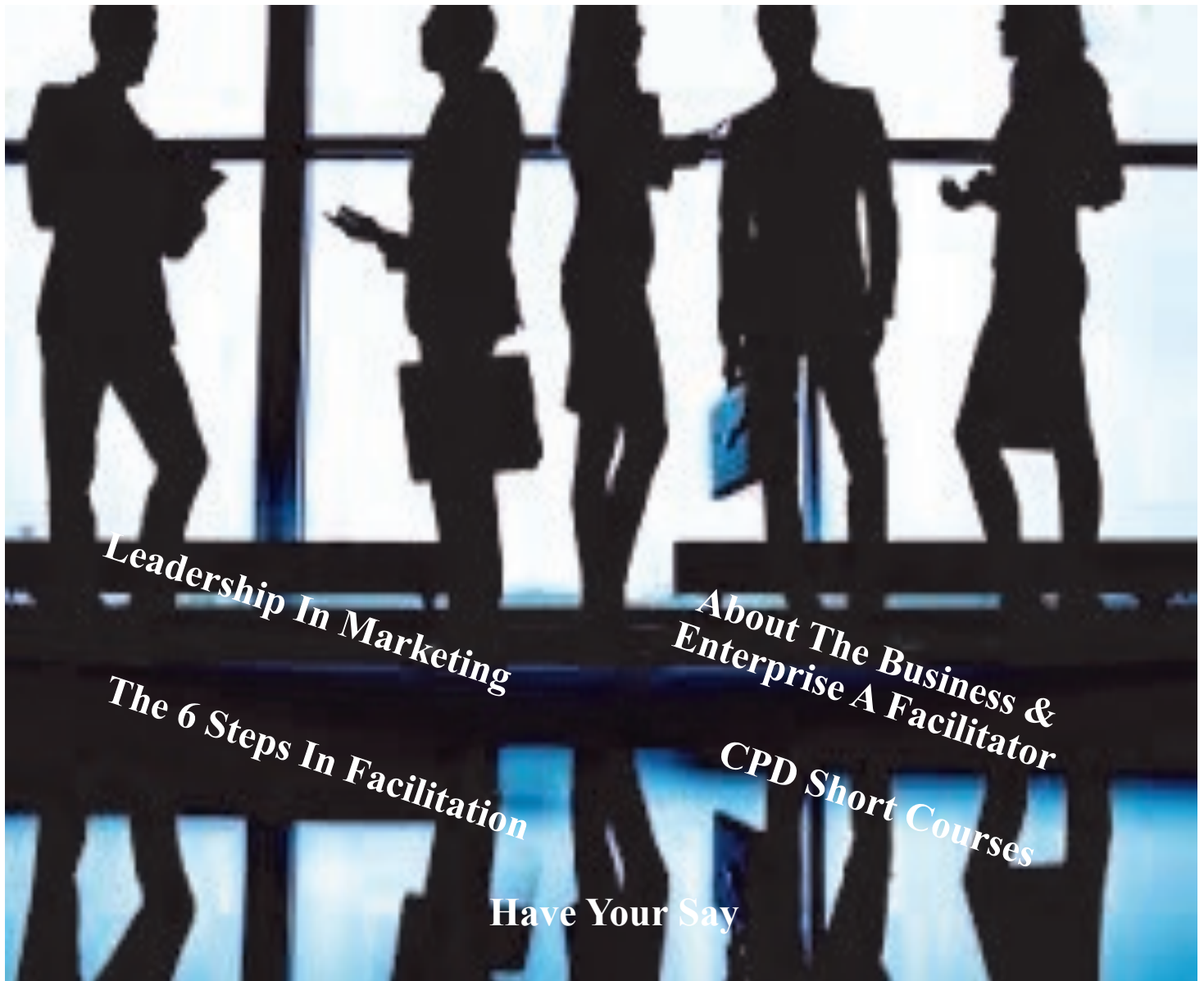


Facilitation Focus

PROVIDING A RANGE OF TIPS, IDEAS AND STRATEGIES

Helping You Achieve Your Business Goals

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



Leadership In Marketing

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Leadership in Marketing

I'm sure you've been there. Bored to tears by someone who only talks about themselves, never pauses for breath or asks a question, and doesn't pay attention to the clear signals to 'please stop!'

For many years, this was the world of marketing – taking the lead and controlling the communication to target audiences. How things have changed!

Social media has given over much of the lead on communications to the customer, converting the role of marketing into prompting and participating in a conversation.

Holding a two way conversation allows you to interact and engage with consumers in a direct and responsive way, forging stronger relationships and also eliciting valuable insights into your market.

Just like the scenario above, social media conversations are like 'real life' conversations – similar rules apply to ensuring your audience isn't dying to escape. Here are five tips on holding a conversation with your customers, in the new age of social media:

1. It's not about you, it's about them.

You shouldn't be constantly talking about your company and products. Not only is that boring, you're not interacting with others if you focus only on yourself.

When you're posting on social media, think of the 70-20-10 rule:

- 70 of your posts should be adding value through information or entertainment.
- 20% of your posts should be sharing other people's ideas or Facebook posts. Consider commenting on other's posts to add additional value or build additional credibility
- 10% of your posts should be promotional - endorsing products or announcing upcoming events.

2. Participate – don't eavesdrop.

A conversation is not about sitting silently on the outskirts; you need to get involved with comments and starting conversations.

Consider sharing a report you have developed with a relevant community group, or asking an open question about a business problem. Invite customers to join the conversation within your own social media pages, through your emails, events, invoices and other 'offline' communications.

By adding interesting content exclusively to your social media pages, like weekly offers or video, you can quickly generate interest.

3. Openly address the negative.

Not all of the conversations may be positive, and there are inherent opportunities to engaging in conversations which focus on the negative.

By responding promptly to complaints online, you can develop a lasting relationship with your consumers.

Furthermore, you can build kudos with other community members by showing that you are listening and care about your customers.

4. Be human, make it personal.

No one holds a lasting conversation with a robot. Personalisation is critical when it comes to your communications, so it's essential to be yourself. Social media makes it easy to bring your company culture to life through posts, photos and designs.

However you should still establish guidelines for your team, to ensure that conversations are maintained within the boundaries of professionalism and reflective of your brand values.

5. Entertain me.

Ever been stuck in a heavy conversation with no light relief?

Interjecting some entertainment into your content will break up the serious content and catch community attention.

As the forward thinking sociologist Marshal McLuhan said, on the advent of the television, "Anyone who tried to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know a thing about either".

In the world of the social media, that comment has never been more relevant.

Cheers!





The Six Steps In Facilitation

The Enterprise Facilitator supports change or improvement in practices by focusing attention on the process of change and by empowering members of the group to engage in the change process together. The Facilitator works to create an environment that supports continuous improvement and introduces values such as respect, inclusion, and neutrality, and where people feel they are involved in the decision-making process.

Facilitators help demystify improvement methods, evaluation, and research and support data-driven and evidence-based decision-making and actions. They create opportunities for groups (or communities) to learn from each other and help create communities of practice that bring together peers to share best practices and lessons learned. They use participatory methods and have expertise as adult educators and facilitators of change.

Most facilitation interventions pass through a series of predictable stages. Following shows the six stages of most practice facilitation interventions.

1. Listening: an effective enterprise facilitator is a good listener, almost like a 'business psychiatrist'. Allowing the business person time to fully articulate (download) the issue or problem without comment or interruption is crucial. The whole

picture is important. Once the story is told then the facilitator needs to go back, ask questions and clarify any issues that are unclear.

2. Questioning: There may be questions that need to be asked of the person to complete the picture. For example, if the client's issue is difficulty in reaching the market a question might be – 'can you describe your market for me?' It is all about bringing the person to self-realisation.

3. Brainstorming and idea generation: it is important for a facilitator to not limit the range of problem solving options available to a client. Both client and facilitator will have ideas that could be tried. There are ideas and potential solutions to a problem that may have never occurred to either you or the client. The words 'what if...' should be often heard in a conversation between an enterprise facilitator and a client. 'What if we looked at the market differently? What if you targeted a different segment of the market? What if you changed the way you are promoting the product?'

4. Business planning: the process of building a business plan is very useful. Business planning never stops and a business plan is always 'work-in-progress'. What is valuable is to continuously work at it, update it, improve it. An effective business facilitator will endeavour to get the business enterprise owner to think about their business plan and how the



current problem fits into the plan. The adage 'working on the business' not 'working in the business' is relevant here. You as their facilitator should help them do this. If there is no business plan under way then you should endeavour to get them to start to build one.

5. Action: he or she came to you to get a resolve for their problem. You have listened, helped them brainstorm options and let them see the issue in the context of their business plan. Now you need to help them take action. You will have other sources of information, contacts and networks and now he or she needs a plan of action. With your help, the client needs to set out a series of steps that can be taken to try to resolve the problem or address the issue.

6. Reflecting: some time later you should contact the client and check out how things are going. This would be reassuring for them but also provide valuable feed-back for you on the process you used and the effectiveness of various actions taken. It will help you improve as a facilitator.



About the Business and Enterprise Facilitator



Facilitator Defined: A facilitator is literally defined as “one who helps others learn or who helps make things easy.” A business and enterprise facilitator helps people to collaborate as they explore a topic or issue. The goal is to encourage participants to think productively and ultimately to articulate key ideas, to ask vital questions, to uncover variables, to find solutions, and/or to identify productive actions.

The facilitator may or may not be a content expert. The word *Trainer* or *Mentor* is often used interchangeably with *facilitator*, but the *trainer* usually connotes a facilitator who has content expertise. Both facilitators and trainers must understand how people learn and how to draw out their best thinking from them.

[Bob Zimmerman](#), Business Analyst, gives his description of a Great Facilitator as: “Part Business Analyst, Part Orchestra Conductor, Part Psychologist.

While the qualities that separate a great conductor or therapist from a mediocre one may be subtle, the outcomes are obvious.

The same holds true for facilitators. Do you think of yourself as an effective facilitator but unsure how others perceive you?

So how do we make sure we don't make one of the most common and damaging facilitator blunders: *Pushing our own agenda*.

With so many kinds of facilitation roles, can we assume we know what being a facilitator really means? Do we, as facilitators, recognize that this is a significant role we need to work at in order to be effective? And, most importantly, how do we

make sure we stay “within” our role as a neutral facilitator and not push our own agenda?

So you think to yourself, “Yes, this is obvious. Of course I am an effective facilitator.” But let's test ourselves to find out how effective we really are.

What Makes a Great Facilitator?

While most facilitators bring their own approaches to a meeting or appointment, the best facilitators allow the solution to be defined and owned by the individuals they are facilitating. The facilitator has the tact and skill to:

- Help the client or team clarify and align on their objective. Then, facilitate by making progress towards the objective.
- Help keep the client's energy high so there is equal contribution, engaged and feels heard.
- Keep momentum or rhythm flowing towards the objective. (Although the facilitator can help the client change direction if they believe it is required.) Staying on track can be tricky since the facilitator needs to balance discussion on side topics that are helpful to the objective vs. topics that derail the goal.

If we believe we are doing an effective job at facilitating, here are some ways we can test our effectiveness:

- Are you directing conversations with your own agenda? Or, are you enabling the client and / or team to have its own conversations?
- Are you making sure the client stays on topic and on track to meet its objectives?
- Are you making sure everyone in the room is being heard? Is anyone's idea's being shut down?

(This can affect the energy of the room.)

- Did you leave your opinion at the door? A good facilitator helps get to a solution, not give a solution.
- If you were not involved in the facilitation, would the client have accomplished the same result?

“Every entrepreneur needs a facilitator or coach,” says Bill Gates, because the fastest way to learn any business is to study someone who has been successful at it. This person has already paid the price of experience.; has already “walked the walk”.

However, it goes without saying that some facilitators are better than others. There are so many people these days offering their services to entrepreneurs, it can be extremely difficult for the entrepreneur to make the right choice.

Choosing the right facilitator is one of the most important decisions the entrepreneur / business owner will ever make.

A business facilitator is there to do only one thing – **to help your client get results** - and a good facilitator's record should speak for itself.

A skilled and professional Business Facilitator should, first of all, be a member of an appropriate institution or association, and have a track record of achieving results for their clients.

Successful business facilitators are motivated and inspired by the success of their clients.

They are driven to get results for their clients who want to succeed; because it is your actions, knowledge and guidance that matter most in the pursuit of success for your client.





Welcome to AIBEF

Continuing Professional Development



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is embedded in our Institute's Constitution, not just for our members, but offering CPD to the much wider and diverse Business & Enterprise Facilitation profession is at the very heart of our Institute.

2020

CPD TRAINING FOR BUSINESS & ENTERPRISE FACILITATORS

DELIVERY	All Programs are delivered online or by Distance Learning and are self-paced
RECOGNITION	Certificate of Attainment issued on completion
DURATION	All CPD SHORT COURSES are approximately of 2 - 3 hour study duration
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Further information or application form please contact AIBEF CPD Training info@aibef.org.au +61 410 082 201



HAVE YOUR SAY

Re: **Facilitation Focus October 2019**

I was disappointed with the article entitled, *Advertising, Is there a better way.*

The author appears to be oblivious to the well known articles in the advertising industry about The Rosser Reeve Fallacy.

If you are interested in this comment I would suggest you type into Google, **The Rosser Reeve Fallacy**, and acquaint yourself with the many negative comments.

In my past life as an Advertising Agent, I always held to the principle that

Advertising purpose was not to sell product other than in rare circumstances but rather to make the phone ring and promote enquiry with the selling being conducted by the receiver of the potential consumers enquiry.

Advertising is perceived as selling rather than being a sales enquiry tool by many who are seeking to reduce staffing overhead costs and are usually unwittingly unaware of the value of their staff people skills

Kind regards

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Welcome to our Newsletter

Facilitation Focus is an opportunity for Business Facilitators, Coaches, Facilitators, 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 members and readers are most welcome

Please send your comments to 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.

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