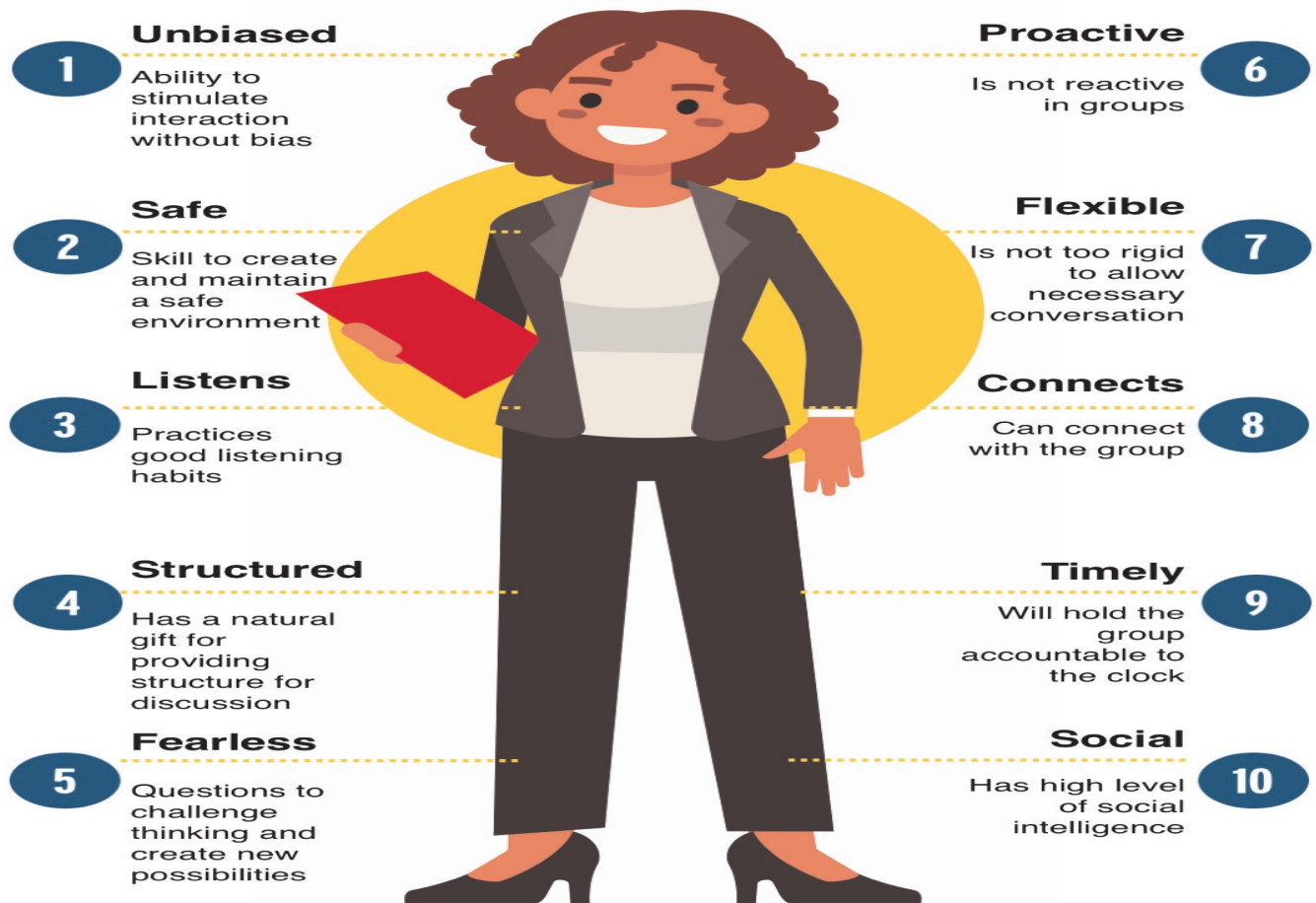


Facilitation FOCUS

Top 10

QUALITIES OF A GREAT FACILITATOR



Cover by RhythmSystems.com



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What Makes A Good Business Facilitator?



What is a facilitator?

[Olivia Hanifan](#) of [Mentimeter](#) believes that a good facilitator wears many hats. *“A skilled facilitator can greatly impact a client by inspiring, motivating, building teamwork, and in turn, achieving organizational success.”*

The skills of a capable facilitator are similar to those of an adept project manager:

- Active listening
- Interested
- Authenticity
- Impartiality
- Tone setter
- Patience
- Organization

Facilitation skills of a business facilitator are defined as the abilities and knowledge a facilitator uses to provide a group, community, or an individual with the resources and knowledge they need to create an impact in the starting and/or running of a business. Some of the facilitation skills a business facilitator should possess are **active listening**, observation, timing, sensitivity to client’s dynamics, and understanding of the learning process.

Although business facilitation has been known as an educational tool for centuries, it has recently become a particularly popular technique for professional development, primarily used within business organizations in the form of personal advising and coaching. On a micro-level scale, there are many start-up settings which provide facilitating for starting businesses in the “incubator” phase.

Facilitation is a process used to enable and support a team or individual in achieving a long term goal, solve a problem, or develop a product or feature. The role of the facilitator needs to be a combination of a catalyst, conductor, team member, explorer, and also problem solver. The facilitator should be capable and proficient in guiding clients through a mix of focus, excitement, hesitancy and bridling imagination.

The skilled Enterprise Facilitator works with entire communities, large and small groups, large companies, SME’s and also the home-based single operator. They should be able to listen to clients as well as guide them to listen to one another.

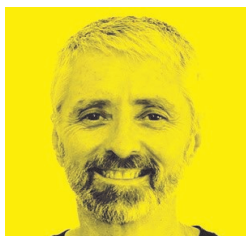
So, what makes for an excellent facilitator? What personal qualities do top facilitators possess that separate them from the good facilitator? Is it more the training or the inner qualities? Is it more the facilitating technique or the artistry? Is it more facilitating knowledge or its application? Is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



According to [Karen Williams](#) of [Librotas](#), a great facilitator is likely to have the following talents or qualities: A sound understanding of facilitating philosophies; The ability to communicate well; Be an effective motivator; Be committed towards results; and Have the ability to take your skills into any situation.

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.**

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT



STEVE BRAMBLEY

In our increasingly digital society, businesses should not underestimate the importance of online reputation management. Indeed, the rise of the internet has revolutionised how customers engage with companies, making it imperative for businesses to maintain a positive online image. So, in this guide, we'll walk you through the essential steps for effectively managing your company's online reputation.

At its core, online reputation management involves tracking and influencing how customers perceive your business. Reputation management encompasses handling customer reviews, addressing negative feedback, and promoting favourable content about your brand. Essentially, by proactively managing your online reputation, you can foster trust with your customers and boost your chances of attracting new clientele.



CRAFTING YOUR ONLINE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT PLAN

To begin taking control of your online reputation, you'll first need to evaluate your current online presence. So, search your business name in search engines and examine the results. Look for any negative reviews or content harming your reputation, and pinpoint areas for improvements.

IMPROVING YOUR REPUTATION WITH CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS

A key aspect of online reputation management is building strong customer relationships. Firstly, you must encourage customers to leave reviews by making the process as simple as possible and actively seeking their feedback. Moreover, by collecting more reviews, you can gain valuable insights into your customers' experiences and identify areas for improvement. Next, when responding to customer feedback, both positive and negative, it's essential to show genuine concern and a willingness to address any issues. Above all, this demonstrates to customers that you care about their experience and are committed to improving your business.

ADDRESSING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK AND DISHONESTY

Negative feedback is inevitable, but it's essential to learn from it and make necessary changes to your business. So, when you receive negative reviews, evaluate whether they highlight legitimate issues that need addressing. If so, be willing to make changes and improve your business processes. However, in cases where negative feedback is inaccurate or dishonest, it's essential to address the issue directly. You may have to contact the site owner or report the content to an authoritative body if necessary. Ultimately, do not let dishonest reviews damage your brand's reputation.

UTILISING SEO & CONTENT MARKETING

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is crucial in managing your online reputation. By optimising your website and creating high-quality content, you can improve your search engine rankings and push negative content further down the search results. Plus, a Content Marketing strategy to improve your website's content helps promote a positive image of your business. Ultimately, SEO will make it easier for potential customers to find you online.

STEVE BRAMBLEY: *Steve is quite old. In fact, over 5 decades old. But, they say, with age comes experience, wisdom, and wit. He's lived in and around Coffs Harbour for the last 15 years and is an experienced local businessman. Since leaving Blighty in 2004, he's enjoyed past success by creating two corporate event companies. Companies that thrived on enhancing communication between employees, management, and customers. With this in mind, starting 'Corporate Copywriting' some 4 years ago and becoming a busy SEO Content Writer has been a natural transition. When not writing, Steve enjoys playing piano and guitar, renovating his old cottage in Dorrigo with his wife, and enjoying the country town lifestyle.*



Betty Zsoldos

CRISES COACH

Trainer, Master Coach, NLP Master

email: bettyzsoldos@gmail.com

web: www.diyminidsurgery.com

[AIBEF](http://www.aibef.org.au) Member ; Master Facilitator

WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO?



Having arrived at the end of the era of “over”-s (that is, overproduction, overconsumption, overpopulation, overgrowth – just to name a few) it is inevitable that we have got to the limits of growth. Being at the brink of collapse makes us experience vast crisis in every major field from micro to macro level. And even if we know that crisis indicates that the old way of operation cannot be maintained any longer, yet we smartly apply a quite diverse tool-set of the defence mechanism to numb ourselves not to feel the collective guilt and despair.

“What's wrong? Just keep smiling and be positive.” - one might advise, but it won't help any more. Why?

To better understand the context we must clearly hear the cultural myth, the continuous mantra of our scientific-industrial world, which is about the story of self, the separated being in a cold and indifferent universe where it is imperative to fight to survive.

In this myth everything that is not “me” is detached and disconnected that threatens my own being. Thus, I must strive to take control of everything: from dubious human relationships to the arbitrary and whimsical forces of nature. It is enough to take a glance at the business to see the dog-eat-dog world, the rat-race, the so-called “non-cooperative” game of only one winner, the continuous and endless fight to rule the market. The players' position in the pyramid, the hierarchy of leadership shows how the power is taken by those who have succeeded to get to the top.

Meeting someone new, asking: “Hello, what's your name and what's your job?” suggests that we want to nose out quickly and implicitly the person's place in the pyramid. What's wrong with that?

The answer is irrelevant and that really makes no difference any longer. We are from the same atoms, and we are in the same crumbling world. During the coaching processes of working with clients from all walks of life I find it fascinating that they display remarkably identical symptoms. They experience their pain, anxiety and fears as well as uplift, as if these were solely their own individual issues; however, we equally share them all!

Even the forms of their expressions are akin, too: they feel their doubts, questions, complaints, etc. so personal as if it belonged only to them. But: “What is most personal the most universal.?” What makes us different lies in somewhere else. Words give people away. Listening to clients I can hear, someone has a “job” or a “profession” or a “mission”. That is, some are busy to do something, anything to get money to survive.

Others try to do their duty at a high standard. And few are the ones who answer the calling! That's what makes a difference!

It all boils down to these questions: Are you a helpless victim of the turbulences of present times or are you the Responsible Creator at the dawn of the New Era? Where are you in this Transition? Do you make your way to the highest level of the Maslow pyramid to be a transcendent man?

How do you contribute now when the whole Earth is in labour, when something coherent and consistent is emerging giving way to our deeper longings? And most importantly: WHO ARE YOU? Can you take off your mask and come off-stage?

Can you change the game? Can you take your part in the rebirth of the Revolutionary Transition of the evolutionary process?



+61402942402

andras.csaszar67@gmail.com

Assoc Member [AIBEF](http://www.aibef.org.au)

Organizations' Strategic Compass

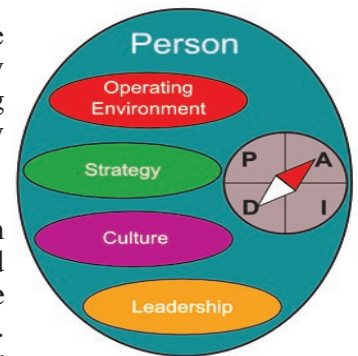
Development of an organization's strategy requires great effort. It always comes first before we go into the details. Once the main principle has been taken shape in a mission or vision statement, you are tasked to work out the fundamental structure. This big picture, usually referred as strategy, will then hold together the cogs in your vehicle.

The other day I read about organizations strategic alignment in Norman Chorn's great book. Wow, I was amazed how everything just fell into place with the model described in his book.

Efficiency is key to sustain long term competitiveness on tough markets, and to achieve it requires masterful design. Just like a reliable compass shows direction at sea, making sure the three major areas are strategically aligned with the operating environment of the organization will greatly increase your chances for success.

Strategy, organizational culture and leadership, the three primary fields have to be harmonised in a common logic. Sounds very basic, right? Although, it's not always easy to achieve. Culture, for example – “the way things are done here” – is not an easy thing to regulate with policies. The question: “How to best serve my client?” has to be neatly planted in every head.

To achieve coordination throughout your organization, four archetypes have been introduced. They describe four typical customer behaviours. These four stereotypes and needs are: **Pragmatism** (be responsive), **Administration** (be consistent), **Divergence** (be surprising) and **Integration** (be understanding). This is called the **PADI model**. Every subsequent strategic level has to match with the same archetype, most proper for the given clientele.



So when it comes to e.g. a pizza delivery, you are expected to be quick (it's a P type). Even quality is submitted to this expectation.

You cannot ponce around to accurately divide your pizza into equal slices or nicely chop up the ham and olives and decorate it like you would in a fine-dining restaurant.

Everything has to be ticking like a Swiss watch and the pizza delivered while it is still hot. Why? Because your market audience here is most probably the always busy and impecunious uni students.

The archetype typical to the business has to impregnate each strategic level. That's what strategic alignment basically means. The same characteristics have to appear each level: either in strategic documents like the business model, in organizational culture like your Code of Conduct or in leadership like policies and procedures.

Although I'm only listing documents here as examples, you have to make sure that your whole organization is humming the same rhythm from top to bottom.

What helps you to achieve this? Strategy is usually in the hands of the CEO, and the bigger the organization, the greater effort is required to implement full alignment. More precisely, to get everyone sincerely accept these principles. And so the fifth, **personal level**, comes into picture.

It is all taking place in the subconscious. **Employees' intrinsic drive must meet with organizational goals.** Just then they can be satisfied, work enthusiastically and be loyal. This is the invisible field that links all the others and provides a solid frame. Individuals have to identify themselves with the mission, agree on the strategy, share the culture, and honour leaders acting on the same foundations. This is the “Alpha-and-Omega” of organizational alignment.

As a business coach I proceed with the personal level: encourage clients to exploit compelling inner forces and align them with corporate goals on each strategic level. I work on forming strong relationship with the organization as well as building bridges to clients' needs.

Why You Should Invest In Staff Training

The CFO says to the CEO, ‘what happens if we train our staff and they leave?’ only for the CEO to respond: ‘what happens if we don’t, and they stay?’

This timeless boardroom adage and its repetition over the years may make you roll your eyes. But training your staff is nothing to shrug at. According to research by the [Hays Group](#), 86% of workers consider training and professional development to be an investment in the future of their career with their current employer. In other words, investing in your staff is an investment in the future of your business. [Forbes](#) tells us that it’s a well-known truth that you have to spend money to make money. Continuing to reinvest in your business in smart and strategic ways is essential for staying competitive in ever-changing markets.

Understanding where and how to allot resources, however, can be a high-wire budget-balancing act. Technology and equipment upgrades, infrastructure maintenance, marketing programs and talent acquisition tend to take precedence. But when Gallup reports that over [50% of U.S. employees](#) are “quiet quitting,” failing to reinvest in your current workforce isn’t an option.

Competitive salaries, good benefits packages and flexibility are musts in today’s still-tight job market. However, prioritizing employee development has some added advantages that truly make it a win-win proposition. From increased job satisfaction and loyalty to better retention rates—and ultimately better employees—continued learning benefits everyone involved.

[B.](#) In its recent article written by staff journalist [Chad Brooks](#), they quote 5 good reasons why investing in ongoing staff training pays dividends:



[Think Smart](#)

1. It helps attract and retain great talent
2. It helps identify which employees are worthy of promotion
3. It increases employee engagement
4. It translates into savings for your company
5. It helps shape the future of your organization

As small to medium business owners, you likely know the importance of having help. Employees are more than just a number - they are the assistance and talent you need for your business to thrive. Few companies can excel with only one person. Employees provide diverse perspectives, skills, and other valuable traits that make your enterprise more likely to succeed in the long-term.

Regardless of the industry, it is critical that newly hired employees be properly trained. Without proper training, there may be an increase in staff turnover, low productivity and job dissatisfaction. [Employee training](#) requires attention to detail, organization and paying attention to the trainee’s abilities.



Peter Nicol
**Wisdom Marketing &
 Management Services**

0417627097
www.wisdommarketing.com.au
manager@wisdommarketing.com.au

Better Get Into The Digital Space



Some time ago I was asked to do a talk on marketing and sales to a group of business owners in a relatively small regional centre in South East Queensland. It was a favour I owed the community for their support of another program I am involved with, and it was promoted as a Marketing Workshop with a bias toward digital platforms.

At my age I consider myself competent to deliver a course like this, but I know there are far greater minds than mine who can talk about this “space”.

I have a young friend of many years who has grown a phenomenal business doing programming, building websites and doing digital marketing across a number of Social Media. He has a thriving business and employs about 6 people. We have worked on a number of projects over the years, and I took him with me.

The format of the evening a four-hour workshop (attended by 32 business owners) was in two parts.

1. I started with how to write persuasive copy and, how to turn features into benefits. Not many people know the difference and, indeed this reflects in the poorly written copy you see on most websites. No point in putting up a lot of money for a website if you do not know how to write copy. Pictures are not noted when it comes to Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). People have to write in such a way that the relevant words are embodied in their copy.

It takes time and many people think that employment of a web builder is the end of the story. How wrong. It is you the customer that has to write the words. So my bit was sobering and I have since had positive feedback.

2. Next my young friend took the floor and went about doing his thing. It was well presented and gave useful and powerful ideas as to how to use the Internet and Social Media platforms profitably. You could see the interest levels rising.

What came next was a complete surprise to me.

It was the high calibre of questions asked by a large number of people. They all had web and social media in their business. The dollars that some were making was outstanding. Now please realise these folk were self-taught in the main. The town where they had their businesses was by no means large. Probable population of under 10K. Yet one was using E-Bay and had a Postage bill each month of over 4K to all parts of the world. That is a lot of product and for everyday items that I would have thought were a thing you purchased in your own town.

Her copy and technology skills were honed over several years and now she was reaping great success. She and my young friend met the next day and he was able to help her with a few ideas that will translate into business for them both.

What can we learn from this?I learned that it can and is being done no matter the size of the business. Give it the time and learn the skills and give your business a boost. This age of digital commerce is here to stay. ***Get with it or get run over.***

MEET JEYA MAIBEF



Jeya Ramanathan
MAIBEF

Jeya coaches and mentors a variety of business across a wide spectrum of industries mainly small and micro businesses for the last 5 years. She has undertaken leadership and executive coaching for the past 8 years.

Through her work with Belmont Business Enterprise Centre, Jeya facilitates Tax for Small Business Workshops and Retirement Income Planning for Women project. She has 34 years' experience as a tax administrator (including investigation and litigation work) and had national responsibility with taxation policies.

Jeya is a strong advocate; through public speaking and project mentoring; for empowerment of women in business. She also serves as a panel/chair of State Public Housing Tribunal, WA for the last 4 years.

Jeya is the vice president (Membership) of Business and Professional Women – Belmont Club. She has co presented workshop at UN's Commission for Status of Women in 2015 on empowerment of women in business.

She is a Fellow CPA, Justice of Peace. B. Commerce (UWA) M. Taxation Law (UNSW) Accredited Business and Personal Coach.

Contact

Telephone: +431437833

Email: jeysothy@gmail.com

Web: silverliningcoaching.com.au



Knowledge— Skills—Experience – Qualified – Accredited - Integrity

Are you looking for expert business assistance with your business? AIBEF and our network of qualified and skilled members offer expert counseling and training across Australia (and beyond).

All of our members are accredited and qualified experienced Business and Enterprise Facilitators, and have been required to achieve a designated standard of training, achieve the required level of qualifications set down by the AIBEF. They have delivered many hundreds of hours of business support and advice to business owners and their teams across Australia.

Part of the role of AIBEF is to provide ongoing Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for all of our members. This ongoing activity ensures that our members can constantly stay up to date and well-informed in their profession.

All of our members operate under a Code of Ethics, which includes attributes of:

*Confidentiality *Professional Competence *Professional Behavior *Objectivity *Integrity

Many of our members are experienced specialists in specific areas of business, and all of our members are “generalists” with a wide and diverse range of skills and knowledge.

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

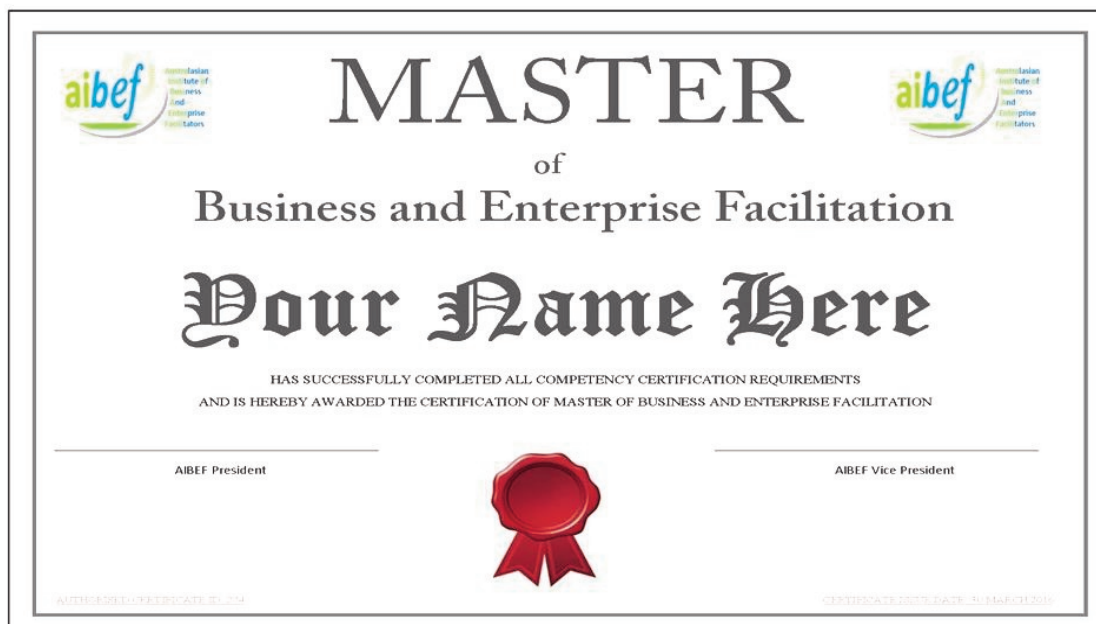
Over the coming months, AIBEF will be featuring some of our members and profiling their skills and experience on our website and also in our monthly newsletter.

AIBEF

Maintaining Accreditation, Integrity and Knowledge for Business Advisors

Web: www.aibef.org.au **Email:** info@aibef.org.au **M:** +61 410 082 201

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 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.

If you are already a member or Associate member of the **Australasian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators Inc.** (AIBEF), it is acknowledged that you already have all of the skills and competencies required.

However, by undertaking this **Certified Master Business and Enterprise Facilitator** program, you can not only proudly display to the world that you are a Master in your role and in your industry, but it will entitle you to use the post nominals *MBEF (Certified)*.

This title truly reflects the role of a Business and Enterprise Facilitator who not only is the complete and total professional in their industry, but one who also applies knowledge, practical skills and experience in leadership and management across a range of enterprise and industry contexts.

Facilitators at this level display initiative and judgement in planning, organising, implementing and monitoring their own workload and the workload of others. They use solid communication skills to support both their clients and their own teams to meet goals and organisational or enterprise requirements.

For an Information Pack please email info@aibef.org.au



AIBEF Code of Conduct

All AIBEF members are obliged to maintain professional standards and ensure the legitimate interests of their clients are paramount. They must ensure that any conflicts of interests are avoided and confidentiality maintained. Members are required to adhere to the highest standards of facilitation, advice, referral, information provision, support and client care through undertaking ongoing professional development

The Process of Becoming an AIBEF Accredited Facilitator

To be an accredited Member of AIBEF, simply submit your application to the AIBEF Secretariat.

The AIBEF Accreditation Committee then assesses your experience and qualifications and will advise you of the Institute's decision.

Often this decision is partly based on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) where the Committee takes into account the equivalent experience of the candidate. The new AIBEF Member is then provided with a certificate of Membership and is invited to have their name listed on the Institute's website, and can immediately use the post nominal *M.A.I.B.E.F.* after their name.

Whether it is a concern about business start-up or growth, a marketing issue, HR or financial issue, a member of the AIBEF can provide effective guidance and support to entrepreneurs, business owners, communities or organisations.

Ph: +61 0410 082 201

About the Institute

Benefits of Membership **Some benefits include:**

Recognition of the professional qualifications of Member of the Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (MAIBEF) and Fellow of the Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (FAIBEF) in Australia and New Zealand.

The ability to use the post-nominals, MAIBEF and FAIBEF in promoting their activities and achieve:

- credibility/validation as an enterprise and business facilitator
- a premium for services
- client confidence and direct benefits to their business secure and regular employment/use as a business facilitator and enhanced market/business opportunities

Personal confidence and increasing business:

- through business support organisations including training providers and centres increasingly requiring counsellors/advisers to be professionally trained and experienced facilitators
- achieved through the formal recognition of practitioner skills
- by becoming preferred contractors.

The sharing of knowledge and skills and growth of new business through:

- peer networking and interchange of ideas with other



Members and Fellows

- peer mentoring of other Members and potential Members
- enabling contacts (formal and informal) with peer organisations and alliances

Regular electronic Newsletters and communications that:

- disseminate news of major developments in the business support industry
- notify Members of relevant conferences and events
- keep Members up to date with current issues
- notify Members about opportunities in professional development

Development of business facilitation skills and knowledge through the provision of:

- notification of opportunities to participate in ongoing targeted and specific professional development
- access to professional development in recommended training courses
- the best and most up to date information on business and training/facilitation.

Representation to others (government and non-government) on Members behalf on issues affecting business facilitation.



A.I.B.E.F. Established 24 years

Web: www.aibef.org.au

Email: info@aibef.org.au



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, facilitators 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, facilitator, 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 Facilitators, 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, 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?

Thanks for the Info

Just a note to thank you for the helpful information contained in your magazine. I'm a client of one of your members, who sends your magazine onto me. I find it easy to read and some of the ideas in the numerous articles are very useful and valuable.

*Peter Haley
Solar For Life
Coffs Harbour, NSW*

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:

www.aibef.org.au

info@aibef.org.au

Assoc. No: AO2912

Mob: +61 410 082 201

PO Box 906 Bribie Island QLD 4507