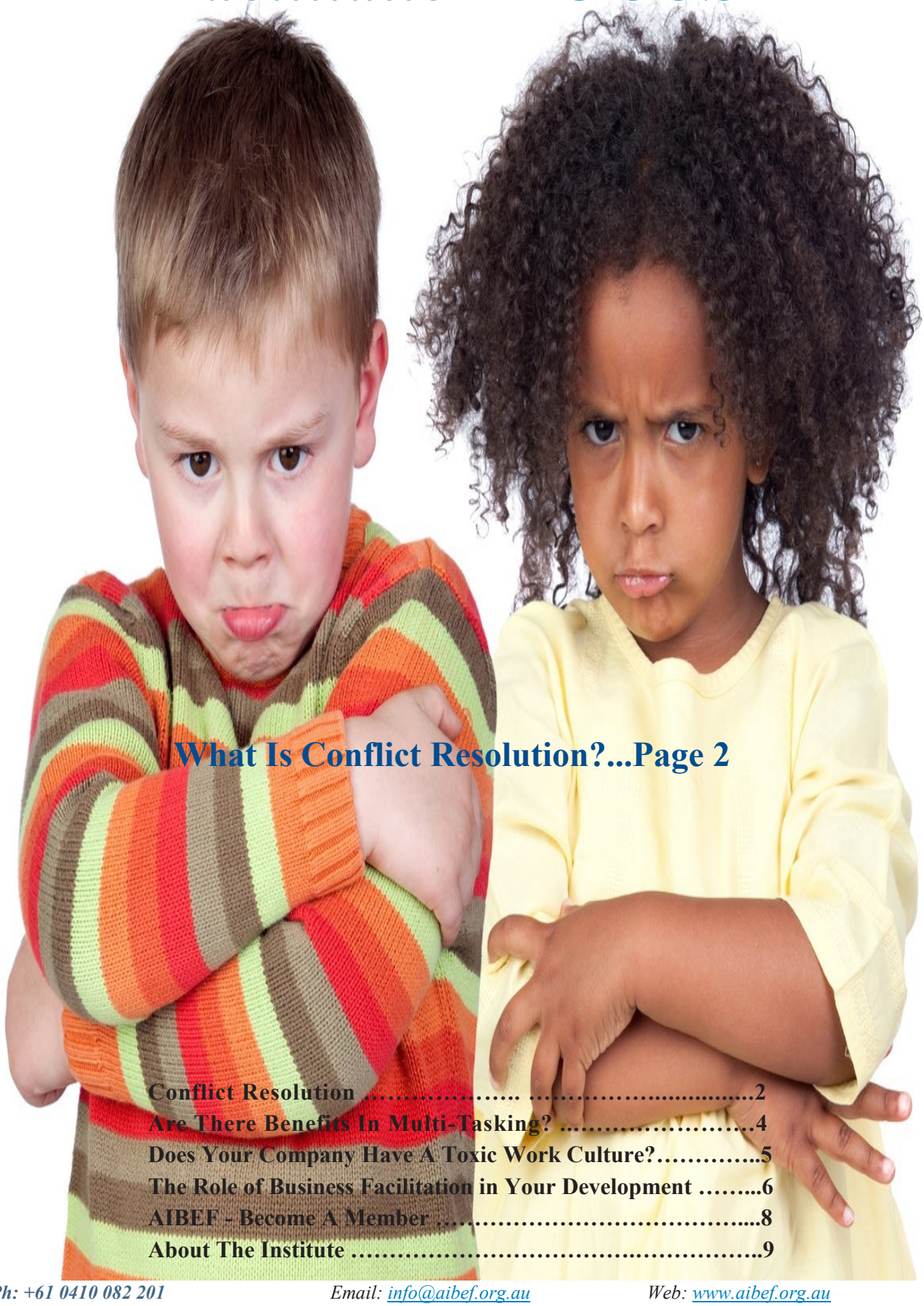
Facilitation FOCUS



What Is Conflict Resolution?...Page 2

What Is Conflict Resolution?

Conflict resolution is the process of finding a peaceful solution to disagreements or disputes between two or more parties. It involves understanding different perspectives, communicating effectively, and working towards a mutually agreeable outcome. In essence, it's about transforming potentially damaging conflicts into opportunities for growth and understanding. (AI Overview)

HelpGuide.org explains Conflict as being "***More than just a disagreement.*** *It is a situation in which one or both parties perceive a threat (whether or not the threat is real)."*

Conflicts continue to fester when ignored. Because conflicts involve perceived threats to our well-being and survival, they stay with us until we face and resolve them. We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions of the situation, not necessarily to an objective review of the facts. Our perceptions are influenced by our life experiences, culture, values, and beliefs.

Conflicts trigger strong emotions. If you aren't comfortable with your emotions or able to manage them in times of stress, you won't be able to resolve conflict successfully. Conflicts are an opportunity for growth. When you're able to resolve conflict in a relationship, it builds trust. You can feel secure knowing your relationship can survive challenges and disagreements.

Having the skill to recognise conflict in the workplace involves identifying disagreements or sources of contention, understanding their basic causes, and facilitating a process to address them constructively and achieve desired outcomes. This includes active listening, open communication, and a willingness to compromise or collaborate to reach mutually acceptable solutions.

If left unresolved, conflict can lead to decreased morale, reduced productivity, increased stress, increased absenteeism and even employee turnover.

THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF CONFLICT IN AUSTRALIAN WORKPLACES ARE AROUND
*EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS
*LINE MANAGER DECISIONS
*PERSONALITY CONFLICTS
*AND UNCIVIL BEHAVIOUR
Arielle Executive

How do you manage workplace conflict? Having the right skills to address the particular conflict or situation is critical. There is quite a lot of information on this very subject available on the web, however, sometimes simply having access to the right information is not sufficient, and experienced Workplace Resolution (WR) professionals do need to be involved.

Relationships Australia offers some helpful advice in their Tip Sheet on ***Managing Conflict in the Workplace***: *"How do you handle conflict at work? If there is a difference of opinion between colleagues about how to carry out a task or project, what do you do? Some people leave the conflict for someone else to deal with, or avoid the conflict or situation."*

Others state and push for their opinion, or may state their opinion but give in when other people have stronger opinions. A good approach though is to discuss the differences in opinion, and try to find an option that you all agree on.

If conflict is not addressed, it can escalate into larger issues where people have difficulty working together.

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Training Course on Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Skills for Leaders

Effective responses to conflict and some of the key strategies involve the Facilitator remaining relaxed and calm, talking softly, speaking directly to those involved, and endeavour to identify and understand the perspectives of those involved.

Conflict Resolution Skills: Whatever the cause of disagreements and disputes at home or work, possessing the right conflict resolution skills can help you resolve conflict in a constructive way and keep your relationships strong and growing.

The University of Arkansas describes The 5 'Cs' Approach to Conflict Resolution in the Workplace as follows:

*"The "5 Cs" approach to conflict resolution in the workplace involves five steps: **Clear communication** to express concerns, **calmness** to avoid escalation, **clarification** to understand all perspectives, **collaboration** to find common ground, and **compromise** to reach a solution. This method emphasizes respectful dialogue and problem-solving to resolve disputes effectively and maintain a positive work environment."*

Conflict Resolution - When to Negotiate: AIFC tells us that Communication skills can be used for building up relationships rather than tearing them down with our; anger, words and actions. Effective communication requires; respect, grace, empathy, active listening for adding value to the person being heard.

Wait for the right timing: Chances are when the person you're having a relationship with is feeling sick, angry, is busy or has had a bad day; he or she will not be ready to listen. Find the appropriate time when you will have their full attention. This will ensure that you're being heard, and that your message will be received.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) assesses an individual's behavior in conflict situations—that is, situations in which the concerns of two people appear to be incompatible. In conflict situations, we can describe a person's behavior along two basic dimensions*: **(1) assertiveness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy his or her own concerns, and **(2) cooperativeness**, the extent to which the individual attempts to satisfy the other person's concerns. These two dimensions of behavior can be used to define five methods of dealing with conflict.

The way your business handles conflict can have a big impact on your profits, as well as staff productivity and morale. Good management practices can help you avoid unnecessary conflict and deal with inevitable conflict in an effective and professional manner. Qld Business

Disputes arise from time to time as part of doing business. They can range in severity and, depending on the complexity, can cost time and money. Resolving business disputes quickly and efficiently is in everyone's best interest. While you should try to resolve disputes yourself, sometimes you may need to seek help from others.

A dispute can happen between different parties, such as a contractor, hirer, customer or supplier. Disputes happen for many reasons. For example, a misunderstanding or different expectations about the results of the work. Planning and good communication can reduce the risk of a dispute. But if you do end up in a dispute, there are ways to manage it and support services that can help you.

Are There Benefits in Multitasking?

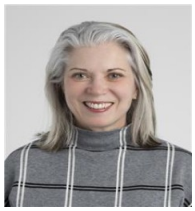
FORBES

Multitasking refers to the ability to perform multiple tasks simultaneously or switch between tasks rapidly. While some research suggests that multitasking can enhance the ability to integrate visual and auditory information, it often leads to divided attention, making it harder to focus on any single task effectively. (AI overview)

However, new studies undertaken by the University of Southern California have uncovered that multitasking is a cause of concern. These studies suggest that multitasking causes us to: make more mistakes, retain less information, and change the way our brain works. This raises questions as to whether multitasking is good for workers.

The USC states *"Working on a single task means both sides of the prefrontal cortex are working together in harmony. Adding another task, however, forces the left and right sides of the brain to function independently from one another. Multitasking can actually hinder productivity and increase the likelihood of mistakes."*

Cleveland Clinic has this to say on Multitasking: *"Some days you feel like a master multitasker as you drink your morning coffee, catch up on email and tune into a conference call. But did you know that for most people, in most situations, multitasking isn't actually possible?*



Cynthia Kubu,

We're really wired to be monotaskers, meaning that our brains can only focus on one task at a time, says neuropsychologist Cynthia Kubu, PhD. "When we think we're multitasking, most often we aren't really doing two things at once. But instead, we're doing individual actions in rapid succession, or task-switching," she says.

One study found that just 2.5% of people are able to multitask effectively. For the rest of us, our attempts to do multiple activities at once aren't actually that.

The American Psychological Association believes that their research shows that Doing more than one task at a time, especially more than one complex task, takes a toll on productivity. Although that shouldn't surprise anyone who has talked on the phone while checking E-mail or talked on a cell phone while driving, the extent of the problem might come as a shock.

Psychologists who study what happens to cognition (mental processes) when people try to perform more than one task at a time have found that the mind and brain were not designed for heavy-duty multitasking. Psychologists tend to liken the job to choreography or air-traffic control, noting that in these operations, as in others, mental overload can result in catastrophe.

Multitasking can take place when someone tries to perform two tasks simultaneously, switch . from one task to another, or perform two or more tasks in rapid succession. To determine the costs of this kind of mental "juggling," psychologists conduct task-switching experiments. By comparing how long it takes for people to get everything done, the psychologists can measure the cost in time for switching tasks. They also assess how different aspects of the tasks, such as complexity or familiarity, affect any extra time cost of switching.

Efficiency and task-switching are significant issues for managers, especially those who direct remote teams. To effectively lead virtual teams, managers must encourage members to stay focused on one task before moving on to the next one, allowing adequate time for the brain to fully switch attention.

Does Your Company Have a Toxic Work Culture?

Firstly, what is a Toxic Work Culture? (TWC)

People Thriver explains it like this: ***"A workplace with a toxic culture is an environment where harassment, microaggressions, unequal treatment of employees, or bad behavior from senior management or other staff is common and unresolved. This leads to employees feeling disrespected."***

In the American Psychologic Association 2024 Work in America survey, **15% of respondents labeled their workplace as somewhat or very toxic**. The workplace should be a source of growth, collaboration and fulfillment. Yet, far too often, subtle behaviors and systemic issues cultivate toxic environments, silently eroding morale and productivity. A TWC can lead to lowered team morale, silent quitting and unplanned turnover. But it can also contribute to heightened stress levels, lower productivity and emotional trauma.

Forbes points out that Several factors contribute to workplace toxicity. Poor leadership, lack of communication, competitive work culture, micromanagement, unclear expectations, favoritism, resistance to change, workplace bullying – just to name a few. These contribute to an already tenuous situation where we expect a group of humans who didn't necessarily choose to be on a team together to collaborate and navigate change while feeling good about working with one another.

Some Key Warning signs of a toxic work environment include poor communication, lack of trust, high employee turnover, and a culture of blame. Other indicators include bullying and harassment, favoritism, unethical behavior, and a lack of work-life balance.

In case you're wondering "How do I spot TWC in my company?" **Flexjobs** points out the **top 20 key warning signs and common causes of toxic work cultures** (**click here**)

Online Psychologists Australia offer this advice: *"If you find yourself being dragged down and unable to function as usual, then seeing some of the key signs of a toxic workplace can represent seriously problematic environments - and is different to "normal" and even healthy stress."*

Critiques of work performance should be part of a dialogue that allows for growth - and includes respect. When people are personally ridiculed, if name-calling is used (even in a 'joking tone'), then all involved should be evaluating the appropriateness of this person's behaviour.

Constructive criticism and humiliation may be confused by someone lacking in tact and experience, but it never excuses the ill-treatment of employees or colleagues.

MIT Sloan believes that TWC imposes serious and lasting harm on affected employees. Workers who experience the elements of a toxic culture are more likely to suffer from greater stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout. They are also 35% to 55% more likely to be diagnosed with a serious physical disease.

Toxic workplaces are not only costly — they are also common. Research on large U.S. employers found that approximately 1 in 10 workers experience their workplace culture as toxic, an estimate that is in line with other studies.7 Even companies with healthy cultures overall typically contain pockets of toxicity, due to abusive managers or dysfunctional social norms among certain teams.

By identifying and addressing these toxic subcultures, a process refered to as a *cultural detox*, leaders can dramatically improve employees' experience and minimize unwanted attrition, disengagement, negative word of mouth, and other costs associated with a toxic workplace.

The Role of Business Facilitation in Personal and Professional Development

Career & Leadership Facilitating

There has been ample research carried out over the years which has established that Facilitation and Mentoring will improve the personal and professional development of individuals throughout their careers. Business Facilitation plays a crucial role in both personal and professional development by enhancing communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, while also providing opportunities for networking and career growth.

So, what exactly is Business Facilitation?
HIP HAUS describes it like this: *"Business facilitation refers to the process of simplifying and streamlining business activities and procedures to make them more efficient and productive. It involves eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape, and creating an environment that fosters growth and development for businesses. Business facilitation aims to make it easier for companies to start, operate, and expand their operations, ultimately leading to increased competitiveness and economic growth. This can include measures such as reducing administrative burdens, improving access to information and resources, and creating a more favorable regulatory environment."*

The Solutionist provides a simplified version: *"Facilitate: to make easy or less difficult; to free from difficulty or impediment."*

Business Facilitation is not about organizing and running meetings; it involves fundamentals such as trust, transparency, collaboration, and commitment to outcomes. Whether it's one-on-one facilitation, small groups, larger companies or an entire community, the skill of facilitation has become a crucial aspect of modern business operations.

According to **Transearch;** *"Facilitation has become an indispensable tool in modern business. From addressing survey feedback to managing sales challenges and fostering collaboration, effective facilitation can be the difference between success and stagnation."*

The shift towards self-facilitation highlights the practicality and cost-effectiveness of developing this skill in-house. Ultimately, mastering the art of facilitation requires preparation, practice, and adaptability, ensuring that it serves as a driving force behind positive business outcomes in an ever-evolving corporate landscape. Undertaking training in business facilitation often includes developing competencies such as active listening, conflict resolution, decision-making, and problem-solving. These skills are crucial for **fostering collaboration and driving successful outcomes in the workplace.**

Business Facilitation plays a vital and essential role in both personal and professional development by improving communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills within individuals, companies and/or communities.

Applying facilitation skills can also improve meeting efficiency. A project manager who uses the tools and techniques in project review meetings and **'scrums'** can get clarity, direction and buy-in. Facilitation is known to enhance creative problem solving. We already know of **Six Sigma** and more recently Design Workshops have been known to revolutionise the strategic focus of a business or organisation.

Business Mentoring

Connect with an expert through our network of Certified small business mentors.

Whether you are thinking about starting a business or need help growing your existing business, AIBEF Certified Business Facilitators offer valuable counseling, training and mentoring services to help you achieve your goals. AIBEF Certified Business Facilitators are located throughout Australia (and beyond). Connect with one near you.

www.aibef.org.au info@aibef.org.au +61 410 082 201

Become a Member .... Join us Today

Are you a Business Mentor, Trainer, Coach or Facilitator? Are you a professional, and an expert in your field? The Australian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators Inc (AIBEF) is in the process of updating and modernising our web site, and we are placing a lot more emphasis on promoting our members to the world.

If you are experienced and skilled in your field, and you are not a member of the AIBEF, you might consider that now would be a good time to become a member and profile yourself/your business amongst highly respected and accredited Business Consultants under the banner of the AIBEF.

Provided you meet our requirements, an annual Membership fee of **$49.00** entitles you to a Certificate of Membership and approval to use the post nominals of the Institute **MAIBEF**; You will also receive our monthly publication "**FOCUS**"; PLUS your photo, profile and bio portrayed on our **Website on your own Personal Page** providing direct access for potential clients to contact you through this portal;

Download an Application Form ..... www.aibef.org.au

About the Institute

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.

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.

aibef Australasian Institute of Business And Enterprise Facilitators

A.I.B.E.F. Established 26 years

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 project 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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