

# Facilitation FOCUS



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## Can Anyone Be a Facilitator?



**Seek** will tell you that you usually need a qualification in training and assessment or a related field to work as a Facilitator. An equivalent level of experience may substitute for a qualification in some cases. Background checks may be required by some employers.

A Facilitator is a person who helps a group or team, an entire community, small and large businesses as well as a sole trader or single operator. A Facilitator guides and supports a collaborative group of people as they accomplish a goal or work on a project together through the process of facilitation.

**Voltage** says that we might be surprised to learn that there are quite a few types of facilitators. Internal facilitators work within the bounds of their company, while client facilitators come in for specific events and sessions, and both may work with any type of team, from a design team to a business optimization team and beyond. Education facilitators manage the unique compliance requirements of school programs while keeping in mind the tight schedules of educators. That's just to name a few types of professional facilitators!

The Australian Institute of Business and Enterprise Facilitators (**AIBEF**) has added two more "types" of facilitators - **Business Facilitators** are specialists who work with small and large businesses, and **Enterprise Facilitators** are specialists who predominantly work with entire communities and/or large companies.

**Voltage Control** says "Naturally, facilitation can be used in every industry where people work together. Effective facilitation establishes the safe, engaging environment and builds a session framework where participants can then collaborate to accomplish their goal. Facilitators sometimes serve as a neutral party, keeping the session on track and mitigating any conflict."



**Dee Scerano** believes that becoming a Facilitator has changed her life. "One year ago I changed my life and my career to work for myself as a freelance workshop facilitator. 10 years ago I wasn't even aware that "facilitator" was a potential career option! I feel very lucky to have slowly navigated my way to this fun and fulfilling career, and I want to help others discover it too. The good news is that today facilitation is one of the most highly sought after skill-sets, and there are courses and materials to help you get there fast!"

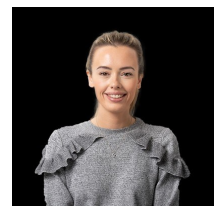
Over the last 20 - 25 years (in particular) Australia has seen a rapid growth in **Training Facilitators**. Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) started to spring up Australia-wide. As the RTO's numbers grew so did the need for skilled training Facilitators.

25 years later, there is still an endless demand for Training Facilitators, and there is more training being constantly developed

Training facilitators support the development and process of training programs to help learners more effectively retain and apply new skills. The role involves overseeing and optimising training methods within an organisation. Within training, a facilitator guides learners towards achieving learning outcomes by asking specific questions, fostering discussion and encouraging self-directed inquiry, says **Acorn**.

Facilitators wear many hats. A skilled facilitator can greatly impact a group by inspiring, motivating, building teamwork, and, in turn, achieving organizational success.

Wise Words from **Olivia Hanafan**





Australasian Institute of  
Business and Enterprise Facilitators

#### 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.*

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



*“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*

*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.*

**JOIN US**    *Become a Member today .... AIBEF*

# Do You Conduct Regular Competitor Research & Monitoring?

## What Is Competitor Monitoring?

*Competitor monitoring is the process of tracking and documenting your competitors' activities in the market, often as part of a broader [competitive intelligence](#) program. But to be clear, competitor monitoring involves more than just keeping tabs on pricing pages and product updates. It's about pinpointing and analyzing signals (i.e. [competitive intel](#)) that will drive real strategic decisions for your business. ([Klue](#))*



An essential tool in any business's toolbox is a clear idea and understanding of reality. Reality? What's that? Reality is the difference between the way you are conducting business compared with the way your competitors are conducting their business. The ultimate goal is to do absolutely everything better than your competitors. But how do you accomplish that? The answer is: **by spying**.

Successful business owners ensure that they thoroughly research their competitors, their industry, and especially, themselves. Just realize that business information is more available now than ever and that your competitors are "on the ball". They're getting smarter every day, and the only way you're going to know how you measure up to them is by actively engaging in regular spying.

Competitor 'Fact-Finding' is a painful job, especially when you learn that you are falling behind, but the opportunities to make your business the best make up for the pain. **So, Here are five suggestions to help you get the best out of your Competitor Research:**

1. **Buy something.** Buy something from your competitors. Do it by phone, email or in person. Compare your sales process to your competitor; what are you doing better, and what can you do better?
2. **Visit your competitors.** Pay a visit to the premises of your competitors. Note the little details that win or lose potential customers.
3. **Phone your competitors.** Focus on the personality and attitude of the person who answers the phone. If it's warmer and more friendly than the person who answers the phone in your business, then train your person to excel in this role.
4. **Make a request for something.** Maybe it will be a price list or a brochure. See how your request is fulfilled, concentrating on speed and follow-up. Do you handle requests as professionally as your competition?
5. **Compare and assess.** Look at your own business through the eyes of your customer and compare your competitor's service, pricing, packaging, people, presentation, follow-up, signage, quality, delivery and attitude.

Only thorough research will give you honest feedback on how you're doing. Of course, there's already a good chance that you're doing everything better than your competitors, but if you research (spy) properly and learn from your espionage, there's a great chance.



Once you've completed your research, react to what you've learned and be committed to improving. Of course, a nicer term for this activity are words like Competitor Analysis; but no matter how it is phrased or worded, it boils down to be totally aware of everything your competitors are doing. Remember, many of the best companies in the world remain at the top of their game by keeping a very close eye on their competitors. Strategic competitor analysis is an excellent way to obtain information about important competitors and use that information to predict competitor behaviour whilst making better business decisions.

In my own capacity, both as a business owner and a consultant, I am often surprised that small to medium business owners neglect to analyse their competition. It is so important to know who and what you're competing with. Can you imagine that Microsoft doesn't know what Apple is doing in terms of its product development and market share, or vice versa?

# What Defines an Excellent Workplace?

There has been an enormous shift in the labour market in the past decade and many businesses have not adapted to the situation they now find themselves in where all staff, and particularly skilled staff are increasingly difficult to attract and retain. In the past Australia has had a double digit unemployment rate and employers could survive quite well no matter how they dealt with their team.

They held the balance of power in the workplace and were able to dictate workplace behaviour and conditions. This is no longer the case. This situation is now well and truly reversed with critical skills shortages being experienced in many industries.



For instance, 70% of Australia's accounting graduates are going overseas to work within the first three years. This means that when and if they return to Australia, they are far more expensive to attract due to their overseas experience. Interestingly whilst complaining about this increased expense, most firms seem to discriminate against candidates who don't have international experience. In my previous role consulting at one of Australasia's larger Registered Training Organisation (RTO), the primary factor identified to ensure the continued success and growth of the RTO was to attract, develop and retain great people.

The Executive felt that if we could achieve that one objective the other goals would also be achieved. Having the right corporate culture and becoming an employer of choice is now seen as a major priority as businesses realize that the 'soft skills' are the hard skills to embed and maintain. So what makes some workplaces different?

According to a recent Australian study, there are numerous significant factors that differentiate excellent workplaces from generally good workplaces. In excellent workplaces importance is placed on how people feel and what they believe about their workplaces rather than the technology they utilize, the geographic location, industry type or any other factor. Absolutely central was the quality of relationships at work – how people related to each other as friends, colleagues and co-workers. In the excellent workplaces the atmosphere of mutual trust and understanding was overwhelming.



Colleagues and workmates supported each other and helped get the job done. Friendship was not the key aspect, but mutual respect and trust were paramount, and this extended to the relationships between managers and workers.

Creating a great place to work involves nurturing an environment where employees feel they belong, valued, supported, and constantly motivated. When searching for jobs, we look for companies with a positive work culture, a family-like atmosphere, satisfied employees, and good benefits.

It's not always about the salary or perks received. Organizations make the best efforts to create great workplaces to enhance employee satisfaction.

## Always Qualify the Client's Needs

All too often sales people fail to listen to a person's needs and wants when doing a sales call or presentation. The art of listening is as important as the art of speaking. We are all pre-disposed to jumping to conclusions about what WE think the customer needs.

Therein is a tale of how it can be. Some 40 years ago a salesman who worked for me was told to make a call on a prospect. The lead came from one of our sales people in Melbourne. They maintained it was "red hot".

I passed the lead to the salesman who went and did the call. He came back furious with the people in Melbourne saying he had wasted his time. I had a lot of faith in my fellow and rang Melbourne about the matter. They were as furious. I took matters into my own hands and rang the prospect and asked him if he would be prepared to see me. He was – and I did.

I went through the full suite of our products. We had two and, I always when doing a new call arrayed both. I had gone over one and then pulled out number two.

The client leapt out of his skin as, he saw that many of his competitors were in our client lists. By now I think you have probably figured out that my salesman had not shown the client the full array of products to let them decide. He had taken it upon himself while waiting in the foyer and looking at their literature what their needs would be. I went on to keep that client over many years.

Sales are about "truth told well". Ask the client what their needs are, listen to what they are saying and do not be afraid to ask them to repeat what it is they want. This re-affirms their decision when they tell you again. Make sure you ask and ask so, you get a complete picture of their needs. Once this is done you summarise their needs back to them and ask if you have got it correct. "You want a blue, 4 horsepower, ride-on, 27 inch mower that has a catcher to cut 80 acres of grass?" Now here you can point out that a 27 inch mower on 80 acres of grass is going to take a lot of time and indeed fuel.

Your product knowledge should now go into overdrive and gently take the customer through the attributes of their needs and what you would recommend and speak of the benefits of both. BUT, it is vital that you never pour cold water over their ideas.

Truthfulness is vital and should the person insist on a 27 inch mower for the 80 acres and you sell it, you are in for a world of grief. I have often walked away from a sale as I wanted to get the best result for the client. But. I also knew I would be in for a lot of trouble if I sold them a product (whilst a good one) was not the one for their needs. I find this policy is of great help when I undertake any consulting work. An enquiry is one that should be handled with the uppermost care.

In the world of sales, one of the most critical steps in the process is qualifying prospects. This important step involves determining if a potential customer or client is a good "fit" for your product or service, and if they have the need, budget, authority, and timeline to make a purchase. Qualifying prospects is not just about identifying leads; it goes beyond that by evaluating their suitability and potential as customers.

Listen and be mindful that the enquirer has put a lot of thought into calling you or popping into your store. Handle those opening minutes carefully and with the maximum amount of attention as, they are the foundations that can oftentimes be a long term relationship.

It is a bit like "kissing frogs". Every now and again one turns into a handsome prince.



<https://answerfirst.com/>

# How Does Running Your Own Business Affect Your Personal Life?

By [Fred Decker](#)

For many budding entrepreneurs, quitting the corporate rat race to start a business is a long-cherished dream. But the reality of self-employment can be a serious shock, especially if you haven't done your homework. Aside from the success or failure of your enterprise, starting your own business has major implications for your personal life.



## The Hours

Launching a new business requires a major commitment of time, especially in the early stages when you can't afford many -- or any -- employees. Depending on your business and how well capitalized you are, it's not uncommon to find yourself working 70, 80 or even 100 hours each week. This doesn't mean you've planned badly, or that you're doing something wrong. It just means there's a lot to do and nobody else to do it. It's important to block out time each week to rest, otherwise fatigue can lead you to make bad decisions. It can also be hard on your relationships.

## Your Relationships

If you're single, the time commitment of self-employment can make it difficult to meet and woo potential life partners. If you're already married or in a relationship, self-employment can place your bond under significant strain. The hours and stress of running your own business can bring out the worst in your character, and your physical and emotional fatigue can leave your partner feeling isolated. This is often hardest on female entrepreneurs who want to feel successful as wives and mothers outside of their business.

## Financial Instability

Working for a salary isn't as exhilarating as running your own business, but it's stable and dependable. You know when the next paycheck is coming and how much it will be. Running your own business won't necessarily do that, especially in the early days. Uncertainties about money add to your stress at home, magnifying any disagreements between you and your spouse. If you've staked all of your assets on the business -- and especially if you've borrowed from family, too -- the fear of losing everything can be almost overwhelming. Conquering that fear is part being an entrepreneur and being married to one.

## It's Not All Bad

That's not to say that running your own business is all doom and gloom. The early years can be terribly stressful, but they pass. As your company grows, you acquire help to cope with the daily grind. Your family sees more of you and your hours start to shorten. You'll have learned how tough and resourceful you can be and how much you and your spouse can get through together. Best of all, you'll have the pride and confidence that comes with knowing you've taken an idea and made it work.



[Fred Decker](#) is a trained chef, former restaurateur and prolific freelance writer. A self-described "food-science geek," he reads academic papers for entertainment. He was educated at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. His food and nutrition articles have appeared on high-profile sites including Livestrong, Healthfully, Walgreens.com, LeafTV, GoBankingRates, Vitamix.com and many others.

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Certified  
Business  
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Australasian Institute of  
Business and Enterprise  
Facilitators

*Established 1997*



## 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.

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## 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](http://www.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.

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## 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 26 years*

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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.

For more information please contact: Editor Dennis Chiron

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