

# YES! AND... CREATIVE GORILLA # 125

*How can you facilitate more effectively as an organisational leader.....*

## Facilitate More Effectively...

*"Like baby, baby, baby oh, I thought you'd always be mine" Lyrics, Justin Bieber*



**"Thanks for facilitating!"**

### *How do you facilitate as an internal leader in the organisation?*

Last night I read an article, which stated that coaching is a lot easier for external coaches than internal leaders. As I tramped through the woods this morning, I thought about this, as people in organisations regularly say to me that it is a lot easier for an external facilitator to facilitate a group.

Overall, I agree and as I walked, I thought about the issues that people in organisations have and how they might overcome them. Here are my thoughts in a question and answer format:

1. How to facilitate when you want or need to contribute?

RESPONSE: Understand the different roles in a meeting. The facilitator manages the process, the attendees deal with the content. One way to overcome the issue is to make clear you are stepping in to an attendee role by creating a facilitator space and a contributor space in the room. Tell the others this and physically move

between spaces when you need to contribute. (Michael Grinder, a communications expert, calls this "decontamination").

A second way is to agree with a colleague that they will facilitate parts of the meeting where you must contribute; a good way to ease others in to facilitating.

2. How to find time to prepare?

RESPONSE: Share out different sessions in a meeting amongst your team and have people design and facilitate them. This involves everybody and helps with issue 1.

3. How to facilitate when you have an emotional attachment to the topic of discussion?

RESPONSE: I call this, "It's my baby" syndrome. You have your own ideas for how "your baby" will develop and these awkward people keep coming up with the wrong ones!

Ensure that they know as much about the issue as you do. Involve them in problem exploration, not just idea generation.

In addition, be open-minded and suspend your judgement when they give you different ideas (yes, I know that's difficult when it's your baby!).

Your worst mistake is to try and manipulate the group to your way of thinking. They will spot this quickly and your reputation as a leader will plummet.

4. How to overcome the fear of it going wrong and looking a fool?

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RESPONSE: This is the same issue for external facilitators. "Going wrong" usually means people start to become "difficult."

To overcome this, be very clear on the purpose, outcomes and outputs required and brief people in advance in writing.

Split large groups in to small teams to involve everybody and lessen the impact of people who dominate. Mix teams continually and use a variety of tools to keep people interested. If people consider you have tried, they will be more forgiving than if they have yet another tedious meeting.

## 5. How to deal with more senior people?

RESPONSE: Acknowledge their status and treat them as one of the group. Use the tactics suggested in "4" and agree they will, if needed, speak last and make choices last.

## SO

Whilst creative leaders in organisations do have additional issues when facilitating, avoid using these as an excuse to run meetings in the same conventional way. The rewards will usually outweigh the risk.

## ACTION

Use the suggestions and see if they help you to improve your meetings.

I would welcome feedback from you on any other issues that you may have as an internal facilitator.

## TO CLOSE

It may be easier for me to facilitate than internal staff, however, I recall one meeting late last year with a challenging group in a cramped environment. At the end of the day, I got in the

car with my colleague, who luckily was driving, and I was almost unable to speak from mental exhaustion.

A day of thinking on my feet, dealing with an attendee who didn't want to be there and leading the group through a process they were not convinced by had scrambled my brain. After two hours of driving, I had recovered sufficiently to become sociable again, but if anyone had said at that point, "it's easier for you..." I would happily have throttled them.

Happily enough, we went back two weeks later with the same group, had a great time, produced a terrific idea and demonstrated the merits of the process. I didn't stop talking all the way back! Just imagine that is how your meeting will go

May all your shots be on target this week!

*John Brooker | Facilitate, Innovate, Transform.*



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