Lean Construction Institute
Transforming Design and Construction

A collaborative presentation from over a dozen experienced Lean IPD practitioners.

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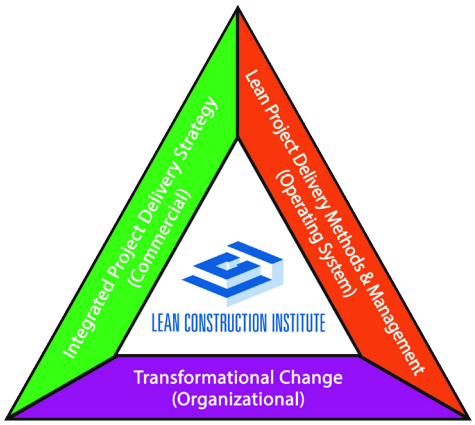
Facilitation



"A FACILITATOR IS THE CUSTODIAN OF THE CONSENSUS PROCESS, A SERVANT-LEADER WHOSE PURPOSE IS TO HELP THE GROUP MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS POSSIBLE."

| Beatrice Briggs |

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References/ Sources

Humble Inquiry, by Edgar H Schein, **https://www.google.com/#q=Humble+Inquiry**

Just Listen by Mark Goulston , **https://www.google.com/#q=Just+Listen**

A More Beautiful Question by Warren Berger, **https://www.google.com/#q=A+More+Beautiful+Question**

http://facilitatoru.com/

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1.0 Why

Establishing a strong team culture is key for Lean/IPD project success. Having a good facilitator onboard will help establish and maintain that strong culture. Lean/IPD projects outperform traditional project delivery projects because they are well-planned and involve key stakeholders early in the project, thus increasing participant engagement. This engagement can lead to more participants in more sessions than on traditional project delivery projects. Effective facilitation of teams is critical to this success. Facilitate is defined as "to make easy" or to "help something run more smoothly and effectively." An effective facilitator brings out the best in individual team members and the group as a whole by encouraging deep thinking, active participation, collective learning, and buy-in from everyone involved. By fostering an environment where ideas, solutions, and successful outcomes flow, a good facilitator keeps the team on task so that they produce exceptional results.

Facilitator Competencies

An effective facilitator is keenly observant, insightful, and tactful – and has exceptional interpersonal skills. He or she must maintain a productive and safe environment, knows when to lead, when to intervene for course correction, and when to be neutral and take a back seat. A proficient facilitator designs, plans, guides, and controls the meeting by focusing on the group process and outcomes, rather than focusing on specific content and opinions involved. A facilitator is not an active group contributor; however, if a facilitator feels it is necessary to contribute to a conversation, it is important that he or she announce they are temporarily "stepping out of facilitator role," make their contribution, and announce when returning to the facilitator's role.

Facilitators should:

- Have strong communication skills
- Make distributed eye contact with everyone in group and use participant names
- Be familiar with the subject manner (This is not necessary if he or she is able to rely on team members for content expertise)
- Respect all participants and enable a respectful environment
- Ask open-ended, impactful questions
- Listen thoughtfully and paraphrase comments
- Encourage full participation from all attendees
- encourage questions and conversation
- Demonstrate an energetic and positive presence
- Be able to connect with multiple learning styles, varied personalities, and differing subject matter expertise of the participants
- Serve the group's objective rather than his or her own personal objective (facilitate not participate)
- Stay neutral by focusing on the process and not the content
- Have the authority to confront and stop unproductive conversations and behaviors
- Manage the room by keeping participants focused, on-task, and on time
- Create a supportive learning climate
- Facilitate agreement and manage conflicting perspectives
- Use his or her voice and body language effectively by:
  - Voice variety matters
  - Varying vocal pitch to highlight key ideas
  - Pausing frequently to allow contributions from others
  - Projecting with confidence
  - Using the room to adjust distance from participants

2.0 How

Event Structure

To facilitate an event well, it is crucial to understand the group's desired outcome and the background and context of the meeting or event. Facilitators should think about the process and agenda for the meeting and invest in advanced preparation to take the event through to a successful conclusion. Great facilitation is a group process that flows from an agenda to a conclusion and creates an environment where the group's ideas, solutions, and decisions flow effectively through the event.

Preparation:

- Things to consider when designing the agenda and event process:
- In what order should the topics be considered?
- How will participants get to know each other? What will be the ice breaker?
- How will they reach agreement on the meeting objectives?
- How much time will be allocated to each item?
- Will there be smaller break-out groups?
- When will recap and summarize occur?
- How will the meeting plus/deltas be captured?
- How will the event be closed? How will the next steps be determined?
- Other things to consider when planning a meeting or event:
- What do participants need to know before the meeting or event? How will this be provided and when?
- What room set-up will best encourage participation? Are separate rooms needed for break-out groups?
- What supplies and materials are needed? (Pens, charts, post-it-notes, projectors, etc.)
- Will refreshments be provided?
- Will participants be given awards or other types of recognition?

Typical Event Format

- If deemed necessary, begin the session with an ice breaker event
- Review Event Purpose and Expectations for the meeting
  - Clearly state the purpose of the meeting
  - Clearly state the expectations of the meeting
- Review and Align on Meeting Agenda
  - If possible, publish in advance
  - Review at the start of the meeting, adjust if group provides strong input
    - Consider asking for hot topics from the participants and how they may inform the agenda
  - Allocate time for external e-mail or communication and keep that promise (this allows for strict enforcement of the no multi-tasking policy)
- Develop meeting Code of Conduct/Ground Rules (some examples are listed below)
  - Stay on Time – this includes start time, end time, break times
  - Safe Zone – everyone is encouraged to speak their mind without concern for embarrassment or ridicule by others
  - Behavior – respect for all participants and open discussion among attendees
  - No Stripes – everyone has equal status and say in all matters; no one person has more authority than others
  - Speak Up – everyone agrees to stay engaged in conversation and share ideas
  - Listen to Others – focus on what others have to say and their point of view
  - No Side-Bar Conversations – only have one meeting so that opinions can be shared and heard by all (unless designed for break-out sessions)
  - Turn Off/Mute Cell Phones – help keep the meeting and participants on track by eliminating phone disruptions
  - No Multi-tasking – everyone stays focused on the meeting and shows respect to participants (this includes restricting use of laptops and PDA's)

2.0 How

Define roles for meeting activities

- Facilitator – leader/facilitator of the meeting is responsible for the following (or assigning volunteers from attendees):
  - Stating their role of a facilitator as "neutral vs contributor" and as "responsible for keeping the session and attendees in balance"
  - Scribe – person responsible for capturing the conversation and ideas generated during the event and for consolidating for distribution the group's final decisions and actions
  - Timekeeper/Gatekeeper – person responsible for starting and ending on time, as well as keeping things on track
  - Parking Lot – person responsible for capturing important items that arise in the meeting and are not on the agenda but should be captured for review outside the meeting.
- Guide and control the event to ensure the meeting keeps progressing towards a successful outcome
  - Keep up the team's momentum and energy. If energy levels decline, consider taking a short break or stretch
  - Listen, engage, and include all team members. Stay alert, listen actively, and remain engaged (this sets a good example) and focus on engaging others who may be less involved in the conversation
  - Monitor checkpoints and summarize. Control the agenda, share what has been achieved, what's next, and summarize often
  - Intervene only if required
    - If there is unresolved conflict, anger and disagreement
    - If there are obvious personal attacks
  - Keep the event flowing and positive
    - Watch for and close side conversations
    - Know when to end a conversation if it isn't reaching a timely, natural conclusion
    - Be on the lookout for people who are not fully participating
    - Pay attention to group and individual behavior, both verbal and non-verbal
  - Summarize, Record and Assign Action
    - Review captured outputs of the event and ensure they are understood, agreed upon, and are actioned
    - Develop next steps for owners and due dates on all action items captured
  - Perform Plus/Delta of meeting

After Event

Ask a trusted colleague who participated in the event to provide open, honest feedback on facilitation skills for continuous improvement

Common Techniques

Several simple yet effective facilitation techniques are available and encouraged to advance the flow of the conversation. Some examples (but not limited) are noted below:

- Ice breaker event at the beginning of the meeting
- Using "round robin" to get everyone's participation
- Asking appropriate focusing questions
- Directing the group to take one to two minutes to individually write down ideas or answers and then share them with the group
- Asking follow-up questions that clarify, probe and redirect
- Drawing out clarifications with phrases like "can you say more about that?"
- Rephrasing a participant's point and asking if that's what they meant
- Identifying and verbally summarizing agreements
- Declaring a "lightning round" to generate ideas and re-energize the group

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