



# Enhancing Group Dynamics in Meetings



## Participant Guide



### Course Overview:

How come some meeting facilitators are able to navigate through challenging group dynamics productively and almost effortlessly, while other meeting facilitators fail to maintain control and keep emotions in line?

Being a skillful meeting facilitator is a skill that can be learned and mastered! Discover best practices and helpful techniques to create a collaborative meeting environment designed to better ensure respectful interactions and build common ground. Learn to ask helpful questions, remain neutral and calm in the face of differences, and avoid negative and destructive conflict while skillfully guiding the group to generate creative and productive solutions.

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*As a speaker, author & consultant, Tracy Butz provides individuals and organizations with strategies to enhance employee engagement, energize workplace culture, and empower high performance.*

## Learning Outcomes:

- Effectively manage meetings and foster productivity as a meeting facilitator.
- Identify and successfully work through common group dynamics that meeting facilitators face.
- Increase understanding and acceptance of differences in others during meetings and/or discussions.
- Ask the right questions to uncover difficult issues and foster healthy outcomes.
- Manage difficult situations that arise by more effectively preventing negative conflict and addressing challenging behaviors.

### Role #1:

## Identify the objective of the meeting and prepare the agenda.

### *Identify the Meeting Objective:*

Ask yourself, “At the close of the meeting, I want the group to...”

- Do you want a \_\_\_\_\_?
- Do you want to generate ideas?
- Are you getting status reports?
- Are you communicating something?
- Are you making plans?

**Objective**

### *Prepare the Agenda:*

- **Priorities**—what absolutely must be covered.
- **Results/outcome**—what needs to be accomplished.
- **Participants**—who needs to attend.
- **Date/time**—when the meeting take place.
- **Location**—where the meeting will be held.
- \_\_\_\_\_—in what order will the topics be covered.
- **Timing**—the amount of time spent on each topic.
- **Note-taker**—who this individual will be.
- **Pre-work**—what work should be prepared in advance.



**Role #2:**

**Communicate the agenda, meeting expectations, and the decision-making process—all in advance of the meeting.**

***Communicate the Agenda:***

Attaching the agenda to the meeting request helps ensure participants will come prepared.

***Set Meeting Expectations:***

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
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- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



**Conference-Call Meeting Best Practices:**

- Advise all participants to sign in two-minutes early.
- Close meeting room door to reduce unwanted noise.
- Introduce all attendees.
- Include a tent card with external person's name on.
- Speaker should state who they are before talking.
- Address the external conference attendee by name.
- Speak loudly enough and repeat questions, if needed.
- Check-in and involve external individual in discussions.
- Silence sound from ext. attendee unless s/he wants to speak.
- Have a system/rhythm as to who will talk when.
- Avoid saying, "Call me after we hang up."
- Say good-bye to external attendee at end of meeting.

### **Decision-Making Process—Four Methods:**

Communicate how decisions will be made at the start of the meeting.

*Instructions:* Place letter in the box of the word that corresponds to the appropriate decision.

- |              |                      |   |
|--------------|----------------------|---|
| a. Command   | <input type="text"/> | Talk until everyone agrees or can support the decision. |
| b. Consult   | <input type="text"/> | Discuss options and then call for a vote.               |
| c. Vote      | <input type="text"/> | Decisions are made with no involvement.                 |
| d. Consensus | <input type="text"/> | Invite input from others.                               |

### **Role #3:**

**Determine facilitation strategy and coordinate meeting logistics.**

#### **Facilitation Strategy:**

- Create a meeting environment that is inclusive and encourages sharing of ideas.
- If everyone is expected to share their view, tell participants how that will occur.
- Welcome dissenting opinions, and encourage candid discourse.
- Avoid spending time recapping for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Communicate pre-work prior to the meeting.
- Use your agenda as a time guide; watch it closely.
- Have a visible “Parking Lot”—a flipchart for concerns to be addressed off-line.
- List all tasks that are generated at the meeting and who is assigned what/by when.
- At the close of the meeting, quickly summarize next steps.
- Become skilled at being a great presenter—use pauses, stories, humor, etc.

#### **Meeting Logistics:**

- Schedule a meeting room with enough time for set-up and take-down.
- Set up room and be ready for when first person arrives—preferably 10-15 min. early.
- Position \_\_\_\_\_ so participants can see/hear all for best engagement.
- Consider providing beverages and snacks, if appropriate.
- Bring flipcharts and markers to capture ideas—prepare charts in advance.
- Test all equipment to ensure it works properly—tele- or video-conference tools, DVD player, remote mouse, speakers, embedded video, LCD projectors, etc.
- Prompter™ for iPad—teleprompter that scrolls readable text for audible presentation.
- Ensure the lighting and room temperatures are at comfortable levels.

The Art & Science of Flip-Charting

*Directions:*

Below are ideas of how to design flip-charts so they look more appealing, are clearer to understand, and become easier to manage.

Working with a partner, read each statement below and place the appropriate word from the word bank into the applicable space. All words from the word bank will be used one time.

1. Use \_\_\_\_\_-based markers—they won't bleed.
2. Use darker colors so they are easily \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ versus write cursive.
4. Alternate colors every other \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Use \_\_\_\_\_ main colors per page.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ should be written 1-2" high.
7. Incorporate bullet/numerical points, \_\_\_\_\_, underlines, etc.
8. Use \_\_\_\_\_ drawings/charts.
9. Skip one \_\_\_\_\_ when creating flip-charts in advance so information from previous pages aren't visible.
10. Create tabs to quickly \_\_\_\_\_ your page.
11. Use lightly-written pencil notes to \_\_\_\_\_ information, if needed.
12. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ at the chart—hug it instead.
13. Use Post-it® paper or pre-tear masking \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Rip with confidence and \_\_\_\_\_ apologizing for tears.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ as many flip-charts in advance of the program as possible.



**WORD BANK**

Arrows	Hide	Three
Water	Page	Line
Tape	Visible	Avoid
Letters	Print	Locate
Talk	Prepare	Simple

### Role #4:

**Acknowledge the differences in personality traits and how they impact interaction.**

#### **ACTIVITY: Quiet Quiz: Are You an Introvert or an Extrovert?**

*Circle true or false for each statement. Add the number of each and read profile description.*

1. T/F I prefer one-on-one conversations to group activities.
2. T/F I often prefer to express myself in writing.
3. T/F I enjoy solitude.
4. T/F I seem to care about wealth, fame, and status less than my peers.
5. T/F People tell me that I'm a good listener.
6. T/F I'm not a big risk-taker.
7. T/F I enjoy work that allows me to "dive in" with few interruptions.
8. T/F I like to celebrate birthdays on a small scale, with only one or two close friends or family members.
9. T/F People describe me as "soft-spoken" or "mellow."
10. T/F I prefer not to show or discuss my work with others until it is finished.
11. T/F I tend to think before I speak.
12. T/F I often let calls go through to voice-mail.

#### **Profile Descriptions:**

**I = Introvert.** *If you answered the majority of the questions true.* Given the choice, you'll devote your social energy to the people you care about most, preferring a glass of wine with a close friend to a party full of strangers. You think before you speak and relish solitude. You feel energized when focusing deeply on a subject/activity that really interests you. You have an active inner life, and are at your best when you tap into its riches.

**E/I = Ambivert.** *If you answered the questions evenly, true and false.* You likely fall smack in the middle of the introvert-extrovert spectrum. In many ways, ambiverts have the best of both worlds, able to tap into either pole as needed.

**E = Extrovert.** *If you answered the majority of the questions false.* You relish social life, and are energized by interacting with friends and strangers alike. You are assertive, go-getting, and able to seize the day. You're great at thinking on your feet, and are relatively comfortable with conflict. You are actively engaged in the world around you, and are at your best when you tap into its energy.

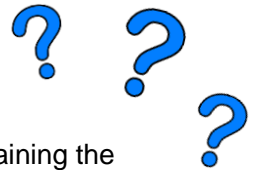


**Activity:** Below are ideas of how a facilitator can lead meetings for better collaboration between introverts and extroverts. Check those boxes of strategies you feel you could use.

- Clarify what ideas will be discussed so time can be spent in advance to formulate ideas.
- Ask people to write down thoughts and bring them to the meeting. This will better ensure that all ideas that are written down will be heard.
- Consider online versus live brainstorming sessions, so that time can be given to think through responses before providing them.
- Put a problem on a piece of paper and pass it around. Each person adds their solutions and builds on those already written down.
- Ask several introverts to share thoughts first so they are heard in the first few minutes.
- Ask both styles to appear on the agenda in prominent roles, not just extroverts (i.e. present some information, share insight about a project, solicit feedback, etc.)
- Ask important questions. Introverts are naturally observant, and can use this advantage to ask key questions that move the dialogue further.
- Encourage introverts to fuse what they're hearing/observing and identify common threads. (i.e. "What I hear Jane & Bob say is our system needs updating. Now what will we do about it?")

## Role #5:

**Ask the right type and style of question to support productive outcomes.**



When the right type and style of question is asked, there is a greater chance of obtaining the specific information that is needed. Below are some strategies to help ask better questions. Place the correct letter in the box beside the appropriate definition.

- |                    |                          |   |
|--------------------|--------------------------|---|
| a. Directed        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Help stimulate actionable ideas. ("How should this issue be resolved?") |
| b. Objective       | <input type="checkbox"/> | It supports the initial question asked and builds on the last answer.   |
| c. Overhead        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Solicit an opinion. ("How do you feel about X?")                        |
| d. Identification  | <input type="checkbox"/> | Affirmative or negative way of answering. ("Is everyone here?")         |
| e. Selection       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seek information. ("How have you been handling this situation?")        |
| f. Yes/no          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Determine who or what something is. ("Who is your supervisor?")         |
| g. Problem-solving | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is posed to one specific person rather than the entire group.        |
| h. Subjective      | <input type="checkbox"/> | Either/or statements. ("Who is right—Barb or Ben?")                     |
| i. Follow-on       | <input type="checkbox"/> | It is asked to the entire group versus one specific person.             |

## Role #6:

**Prevent negative conflict and address challenging behaviors in a professional and prompt manner.**

*Directions:* Below are strategies to help prevent negative conflict from occurring. Check those boxes of those strategies you feel you could focus more effort on to improve.

- Deal with conflict immediately; avoid the temptation to ignore it.
- Be open; if people have issues, address them immediately.
- Encourage different points of view—ask everyone for input.
- Practice clear communication—articulate thoughts and ideas clearly.
- Practice identifying assumptions—ask yourself "why" on a regular basis.
- Don't let conflict get personal. Stick to facts and issues.
- Focus on actionable solutions rather than what can't be changed.
- Avoid looking for blame. Encourage ownership of the problem and solution.
- Demonstrate respect. If situation escalates, take a break; wait for emotions to subside.
- Actively listen.



### Difficult Participants:

Various dynamics may occur during meetings. Below are several of the more common ones.

1. **Chatterboxes:** Talks incessantly; not everything is irrelevant, but tends to drag conversation on or go off track.
2. **Disengaged:** Are either bored, not wanting to be present, or focused on something more important to him/her.
3. **Dominator:** Often aggressive, over-confident, and uses meeting as a personal forum.
4. **Challenger:** Highly judgmental, perpetually challenges points, and may argue just to seek attention.
5. **Complainer:** Complains about something often, sometimes relevant and others not, but is often disruptive.



**Chatterboxes:**

These participants talk incessantly; not everything is irrelevant, but tends to drag the conversation on or go off track.

***Strategies to Resolve:***

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**Disengaged:**

They are either bored, not wanting to be present, or focused on something more important to him/her.

***Strategies to Resolve:***

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**Dominators:**

These participants are often aggressive, over-confident, and use meetings as a personal forum.

***Strategies to Resolve:***

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**Challengers:**

They are highly judgmental, perpetually challenge points, and may argue just to seek attention.

***Strategies to Resolve:***

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**Complainers:**

These participants complain often, sometimes relevant and others not, but are often disruptive.

***Strategies to Resolve:***

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**Personal Commitment:**

What are 2-3 *things* will you commit to doing to enhance group dynamics in meetings you lead or participate in? And by *when* will you hold yourself accountable?

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“I am thankful for the difficult people in my life. They have shown me exactly who I don’t want to be.”

~ Author Unknown



### Speaker Biography

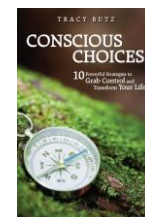
Tracy Butz is a devoted wife, an energetic mom of three adventurous young men, a successful consultant, a captivating author and a true inspiration to many. Whether it is for an audience of 7, 70 or 700+, she is the speaker of choice who inspires others to live more productive, passionate and purposeful lives.

As a highly sought-after speaker, Tracy has delivered powerful, life-changing messages, encouraging her audiences to identify what is most important to them and focusing their decisions in that direction, creating a positive difference in their work, families and communities. She is well known for her captivating and dynamic delivery, where audiences can be found sitting on the edge of their seats, laughing aloud and brushing away tears as she masterfully recounts each story, aligned with a key point, an impactful meaning, and an enduring message.



Tracy is also the proud recipient of the coveted Certified Speaking Professional™ (CSP) designation, the highest honor in the speaking profession, held by only 12 percent of speakers worldwide. Established in 1980 by the National Speakers Association (NSA), it is the speaking profession's international measure of professional platform skill. Well-known as a rigorous and comprehensive five-to-ten year process with very strict criteria, the CSP designation is earned through demonstrating high competence in not only exceptional speaking ability, but also outstanding business management, recognized ethics and integrity, and a proven track record of distinguished professionalism and success. In addition to being a recognized speaker of the National Speakers Association, Tracy has over 20 years of experience actively engaging both large- and small-size audiences, from a wide range of industries, including the US Army, Motorola, US Bank, Shopko, NAMIC, and Subway, just to name a few.

Beyond engaging audiences, Tracy is also the proud author of three books. Her newest, *“Tame the Turbulence: Avoid Losing It. Fly Through It.”* helps you to stop stress from spiraling out of control, allowing for a more balanced, productive and meaningful life. *“Conscious Choices: 10 Powerful Strategies to Grab Control and Transform Your Life,”* focuses on overcoming obstacles, making better decisions, and viewing setbacks with a new perspective. Lastly, *“The Perfect Pair of Jeans: Design Your Life to Fit You,”* guides you toward designing and living your life in a way that is aligned with your dreams and what matters most, rather than letting it happen to you by default.



In addition to speaking and writing, Tracy also has significant experience in an organizational development environment, including 10 years as Director of Learning and Development for a highly successful mutual insurance company, leading the company's talent management, employee development, and corporate training initiatives.

Tracy loves life and is continually challenging herself to share her talents, message and inspiration with others. She is poised to provide solutions for your organization's needs. Tracy truly delivers the tools for today's world, helping to further engage employees, energize workplace culture, and empower high performance.