

# Facilitator Basics



## KEY LEARNINGS: FACILITATOR BASICS

### 1. Role of a Brainstorming Facilitator

- The facilitator guides the process, keeps energy high, and ensures productivity.
- The goal is to create an open and inclusive space where all ideas are welcomed.
- A good facilitator balances structure and creativity, making sure ideas flow without judgment.

### 2. Key Facilitation Techniques

#### Be Enthusiastic and Positive

- Your energy sets the tone—if you're excited, the team will be too.
- Use upbeat language, smiles, and positive reinforcement to keep engagement high.
- A warm and encouraging atmosphere helps people feel safe sharing their ideas.

#### Explain the Rules & Purpose Clearly

- At the start, clearly define the purpose of the session. Example:
  - “We’re here to generate as many ideas as possible for X problem.”
- Reiterate the ground rules:
  - No judging ideas.
  - Quantity over quality.
  - Build on each other’s ideas.
- Setting these expectations empowers you to enforce them later if needed.

#### Encourage All Voices

- Keep an eye on who’s participating and who’s staying quiet.
- Gently invite quieter participants:
  - “Sasha, since you work closely with this issue, any thoughts?”
- Try round-robin brainstorming (everyone shares one idea in turn) or brainwriting for more equal participation.
- If someone is over-participating, acknowledge them and shift focus:
  - “Great input! Let’s also hear from someone we haven’t yet.”

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### Keep the Momentum Going

- Acknowledge every idea:
  - Nod, say “Great idea!” or “Let’s write that one down.”
- If energy drops, use creative prompts:
  - “How would a child approach this problem?”
  - “What would happen if we had unlimited budget?”
- If needed, give a short break (a quick stretch can reset energy).

### Enforce Ground Rules Diplomatically

- If someone starts criticizing an idea, intervene gently:
  - “We’re in idea mode right now—let’s evaluate later.”
- If two people start debating, acknowledge the idea and refocus:
  - “That’s an interesting point! Let’s capture it and move on to more ideas.”
- Keep the session safe and non-judgmental for idea sharing.

### Manage Time Effectively

- Keep an eye on the clock or assign a timekeeper.
- If the session flows well, extend slightly (if the group agrees).
- If ideas slow down, wrap up—don’t force brainstorming past its peak.
- Allow some time for grouping ideas or first impressions after idea generation.

### Stay Neutral on Content

- Avoid showing personal preferences for certain ideas.
- Even if you think an idea is brilliant or unrealistic, react the same way.
- If the facilitator seems biased, people may self-censor their ideas.
- You can suggest ideas sparingly, but focus on guiding, not leading.

### Close with Appreciation

- End the session with gratitude and positivity:
  - “Thanks, everyone! That was an incredible session!”
- Reiterate next steps so participants know their ideas will be considered:
  - “I’ll compile these ideas and send them out.”
  - “We’ll meet next week to select the top ideas.”

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### 3. Key Takeaways

- A great facilitator keeps the energy high, encourages participation, and ensures structure.
- Protecting the brainstorming space from judgment leads to better, more creative ideas.
- With practice, facilitators learn to read the room and adapt their approach to different groups.