Work Better Faster Together

The Ultimate Facilitation Guide For Project Executives.



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Content

3. How to Use This Guide
4. Welcome
5. Who am I
6. Navigating the Project Maze - The Executive's Dilemma
8. Pitfalls of Suboptimal Solutions
9. Chapter 1: The Importance of Collaboration
15 Chapter 2: What is Facilitation
18 Chapter 3: Facilitator's value
23 Chapter 4: Why We need Facilitation
25 Chapter 5: Issues Facilitators Help Solve
41 Chapter 6: Building A Collaborative Culture With Facilitation
44 Chapter 7: Working With A Facilitator



How To Use This Guide

This guidebook is tailored for Project Executives, Project Managers, Leaders and Project Team Members seeking effective solutions to complex projects, accelerated planning, innovation, change management, organizational development and growth. We've laid out the fundamental things you'll need to consider to boost collaboration and start achieving outstanding results.

Whether you're navigating a complex problem or aiming for faster and more effective planning, this guidebook is your go-to practical reference.

So, What is a Project? Think of it as a giant puzzle. We're excited to solve it, but there's a catch – we're not quite sure what the whole picture looks like! Starting a project quickly is essential, but it's a bit like trying to solve a puzzle without knowing the full picture.



Welcome!

Welcome to "The Ultimate Facilitation Guide For Project Executives". We're excited to have you join us on this journey to explore how effective facilitation can enhance collaboration and reshape success for your team, project, and organization.

In today's fast-paced and interconnected business world, collaboration is more than just a buzzword; it's a strategic necessity. This guide is your first step in unlocking the potential of collaboration through the art of facilitation.

In a dynamic world that demands agility, innovation, and adaptability, the significance of collaboration cannot be overstated. People inside and outside companies are working more closely together. Employees really want to have a say in decisions, and many are also doing a mix of office and remote work.

Businesses understand that working together well is super important for making good decisions, executing projects and improving the whole company. But here's the catch: they're not doing it in the best way. What they really need is to adopt open collaboration. This means creating a work culture and leadership style that focuses on making employees' experiences better by involving employees in decision-making processes early on, especially if they are going to affect them.

This guide serves as your passport to understanding how facilitation, the unsung hero of collaborative success, can elevate your team's performance and drive your organization toward exceptional results.

Let's open the door to success together.
Warm regards,

Iwona Wilson

Who Am I?

Iwona Wilson is a master facilitator, trainer, strategist, and Amazon Best Seller Author, with a mission to help leaders build strong teams, projects, and organizations with employees buying-in right from the start.

Her vision is a world in which every team, leader, organization, and community can speak openly, connect, learn, and contribute.

She believes that we can transform workplaces into spaces where people feel empowered, work together well, and can achieve success.

She loves working with ambitious leaders and their organizations who want to be the best in their industry.

Previously, Iwona spent more than 15 years working in the oil and gas industry for international organizations such as MWKL/KBR in London UK, Foster Wheeler in Reading, UK, and Woodside Energy in Perth Australia; undertaking various leadership roles from quality management, knowledge management to group coaching, training, and facilitation.

She holds a Master's Degree in Management and Engineering from the Wroclaw University of Economics in Poland.



Iwona Wilson

Founder of the Wilson Biz Consulting
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Navigating the Project Maze: The Executives Dilemma

Let's talk about a common challenge we often face when kicking off a project – a dilemma, if you will.

Picture this: you're steering a ship into uncharted waters. The pressure is on to sail fast, but you also need to be certain of your destination. This is what we call the "Executive Dilemma."

How to find the delicate balance between fast execution and crafting optimal solutions? Here are some ideas:

Framing Projects Right: A Missing Piece in the Puzzle

Executives often find themselves caught in this dilemma first. The rush to get started can overshadow the critical step of framing projects properly from the idea stage. This means engaging the right stakeholders at the right time, for the right reasons, with the right tools and ensuring everyone is on the same page. Without these steps, projects risk becoming a maze of confusion, leading to more recycle and suboptimal solutions.

The Recycle Dilemma: Why Mistakes Matter

When we rush through the early stages of a project, mistakes are more likely to happen. It's like building a house without a solid foundation. These early mistakes, if not corrected, lead to what we call "recycling." Imagine having to redo a part of the project because it wasn't done right the first time. It's not just time-consuming; it can also strain relationships within the project team.

Blame Game Dynamics: Contractors vs. Project Teams

When things go wrong, project teams might point fingers at contractors, thinking they did a poor job. But here's the catch – contractors can only work with what they're given. If the project is poorly defined from the start, it's the owner's responsibility. Rushing through the gates without a solid plan sets the stage for suboptimal solutions and, eventually, the blame game.

The Responsibility Shift: From Contractors to Owners

Let's set the record straight: contractors are like skilled artists. They can create beautiful projects with the right materials and a clear vision. However, if the vision is unclear or the materials are of poor quality, the owner bears the responsibility for the outcome. It's about ensuring that everyone has the right information at the right time.

Numbers Speak: Why It's a Tricky Business

Did you know that more than 70% of projects don't go as planned? Starting a project is like starting a race, and if you don't start right, you might stumble along the way.

The Balanced Approach: Speed with Strategy

So, how do we strike the right balance? It's about acknowledging the need for speed while recognizing that a strategic approach pays off in the long run.

In the upcoming sections of this guide, we'll explore how facilitation services, especially in the form of Opportunity Framing workshops, can be the compass that guides you through this delicate balancing act.

Pitfalls of Suboptimal Solutions

So, what's the impact of Suboptimal Solutions?

- **Incomplete Problem Resolution**: Suboptimal solutions often address only part of the problem, leaving underlying issues unattended and allowing challenges to persist.
- **Resource Inefficiency**: Implementing solutions that don't fully solve the problem can lead to unnecessary expenditure of time, funds, and effort without delivering desired results.
- **Reputation Impact**: Projects consistently yielding suboptimal results may negatively influence the perception of the team, project, or organization among stakeholders.
- **Customer Discontent**: Suboptimal solutions might not meet the expectations of stakeholders, resulting in dissatisfaction and potential strains in relationships.
- **Increased Project Risk**: Relying on suboptimal solutions can heighten the overall risk of project failure, particularly if issues continue to linger.
- **Missed Innovation Opportunities**: Suboptimal solutions may overlook chances for innovation or improvement, limiting the project's potential success.
- **Team Morale Reduction**: Continuous reliance on suboptimal solutions can demoralize project teams, impacting their confidence and enthusiasm for the project.
- **Limited Adaptability**: Suboptimal solutions may lack flexibility, making it challenging to adjust to changing project dynamics or unforeseen challenges.
- **Objective Achievement Challenges**: Projects dependent on suboptimal solutions may encounter difficulties in reaching their intended objectives, affecting overall project success.



Chapter 1
The Importance of Collaboration

Collaboration Is The Key To Organizational Success

What an exciting time we live in! The world of work is changing rapidly, putting more focus on people and on how we work together throughout our companies and supply chain.

Project managers and project management are going through number of challenges. Our projects seem to be larger, and more complex, teams working from different locations, time zones and cultures, integration needs and a shortage of skilled people, and Artificial Intelligence.
All of these trends will likely intensify in the next 10 years.

👉 On top of this we have poor engagement, great resignation and quiet quitting.

Understanding how to work with groups of people so they can produce outstanding results has never been more challenging, nor more crucial to achieving project and organizational success.

Statistics Speak: The Impact of Collaboration

- According to a McKinsey study, companies with effective collaboration are twice as likely to be top financial performers.
- The Project Management Institute (PMI) reports that 76% of highly collaborative project teams meet their project goals successfully.
- A Harvard Business Review survey found that 91% of respondents believe that problems in communication and collaboration can negatively impact project outcomes.

Collaboration is more than just people working on the same project.

Why Collaboration Matters?

- **Efficiency -** When teams work in harmony, they navigate challenges more efficiently, reducing delays and enhancing overall project speed.
- **Innovation** - Collaborative environments foster idea generation and problem-solving, paving the way for innovative solutions that may not emerge in siloed workspaces.
- **Risk Mitigation** - By pooling collective knowledge, teams can identify and address potential risks early in the project lifecycle, minimizing the likelihood of setbacks.
- **Enhanced Decision-Making** - Collaboration ensures that decisions are not driven by individual biases but are a result of diverse inputs, leading to more robust and thoughtful choices.

Collaboration is the secret sauce for awesome teamwork, successful projects, and super productive organizations.



Alone we can do so little,
together we can do so much.

HELEN KELLER

Great things in business are never done
by one person; they're done
by a team of people.

STEVE JOBS

The Results of Effective Collaboration

Increased Project Success Rates: Teams that prioritize collaboration show a remarkable 64% increase in project success, as demonstrated by a Harvard Business Review study.

Enhanced Organizational Performance: Organizations fostering a collaborative culture are twice as likely to be top performers in terms of organizational health, according to McKinsey.

Heightened Employee Productivity: Companies that actively promote teamwork report a substantial 36% improvement in employee productivity.

Innovation and Synergy: Effective collaboration creates a dynamic environment for ideas to flourish, fostering innovation and synergy among team members.

Positive Workplace Dynamics: Collaborative efforts contribute to a positive and engaging workplace culture, leading to increased employee satisfaction and retention.

Adaptability to Change: Teams that collaborate seamlessly are better equipped to adapt to changing circumstances and navigate challenges successfully.

Optimized Resource Utilization: Efficient collaboration ensures that resources, including time and expertise, are utilized optimally, maximizing overall efficiency.

Improved Problem-Solving: Collaborative teams bring diverse perspectives to the table, enhancing problem-solving capabilities and leading to more effective solutions.

Enhanced Communication: Effective collaboration promotes open communication channels, reducing misunderstandings and fostering a culture of transparency within the team.

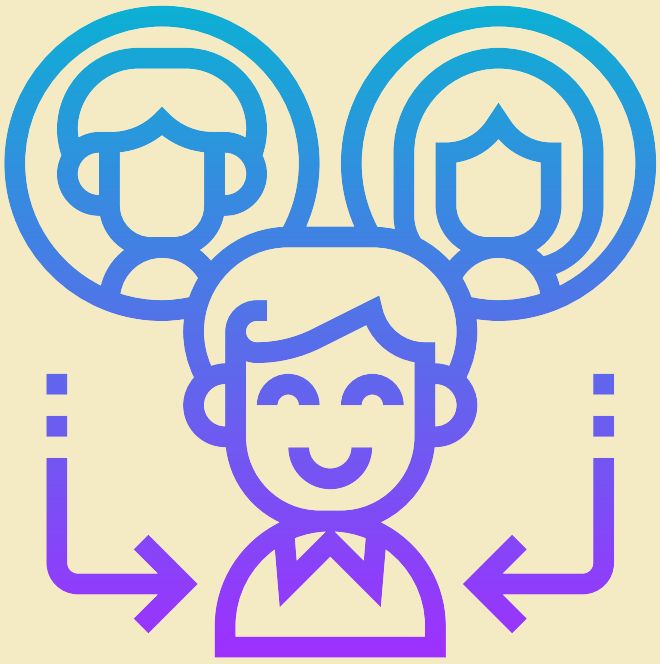
Accelerated Decision-Making: Collaborative teams can make quicker and more informed decisions, contributing to agility in responding to opportunities and challenges.

When there is change, there is conflict. .. It is about learning from each other and fitting all those little jigsaw pieces together to create a picture. It is all about taking away the authority and power that people have and allowing people to collectively problem-solve without that ranking dynamic.

ALAN HALFORD
Facilitator, Open Space Expert
"Ordinary Meetings Don't Interest Me"

All the research shows that if you get a group of people working collaboratively (not cooperatively, compliantly, or coercively); I'm talking about a genuinely collaborative group, the solutions tend to be more elegant. And what makes them more elegant is the level of shared commitment and understanding of the nature of both the problem and its solution.

NEIL PRESTON
Organizational Psychologist
"Ordinary Meetings Don't Interest Me"



Chapter 2
What is Facilitation

What Is Facilitation?

Facilitation has been around for a while, but its true impact has become more apparent in recent times. Here's a simple breakdown of what it's all about:

1. Making Sure Everyone's Voice is Heard:

- Facilitation is like being the conductor of a team orchestra. It ensures that everyone in the room gets a chance to share their thoughts and ideas

2. Driving Towards Action:

- The goal is not just to have discussions but to make things happen. Facilitators focus on achieving tangible outcomes every time a group meets

3. Bringing Structure to Discussions:

- Facilitation is about adding a bit of order to the chaos of group discussions. It's like creating a roadmap for conversations to ensure they are effective and meaningful

4. Creating Actionable Outcomes:

- The magic of facilitation lies in turning discussions into actionable results. It's not just about talking but about doing something concrete after every meeting.

👉 Facilitation is about making group interactions more productive, ensuring everyone has a say, and turning discussions into real, actionable plans. It's a superpower for bringing people together and getting things done!

Group facilitation is a process in which a person who is acceptable to all members of a group, substantively neutral, and has no decision making authority, intervenes to help a group improve the way it identifies and solves problems, and makes decisions, in order to increase the group's effectiveness.

ROGER SCHWARZ

Leading contemporary writer on facilitation

I see group facilitation as a whole constellation of ingredients: a deep belief in the wisdom and creativity of people; a search for synergy and overlapping goals; the ability to listen openly and actively; a working knowledge of group dynamics; a deep belief in the inherent power of groups and teams; a respect for individuals and their points of view; patience and a high tolerance for ambiguity to let a decision evolve and gel; strong interpersonal and collaborative problem-solving skills; an understanding of thinking processes; and a flexible versus lock-step approach to resolving issues and making decisions

MICHAEL DOYLE

Foreword to Facilitators Guide to Participatory Decision-Making (By Sam Kaner)



Chapter 3
Facilitator's Value

Facilitator's Value

At Wilson Biz Consulting, we believe that facilitators help organizations figure out what's important, develop strategies, frame complex projects, solve problems, and turn fantastic ideas into reality—quickly by harnessing the power of collaboration.

Who is a Facilitator?

Facilitator is like the conductor of an orchestra, ensuring that every instrument (or team member) plays harmoniously. They are neutral, objective individuals who guide discussions, manage group dynamics, and keep the workshop on track. Facilitators are not there to provide solutions; they're there to create the space for the team to find their own answers.



Facilitators Wear Many Hats, For Instance:



Guiding Discussions: Facilitators lead discussions, ensuring groups can stay on track, focused, and result-oriented.

Encouraging Participation: Facilitators create an environment where everyone feels comfortable contributing, ensuring diverse perspectives are considered.

Problem-Solving Support: Facilitators bring expertise in various problem-solving techniques, bringing structure, processes and guiding teams to identify and resolve challenges effectively.

Decision-Making Assistance: Facilitators help teams navigate decision-making processes, ensuring informed choices and efficient outcomes.

Time Management: Facilitators keep meetings on schedule, optimizing time and ensuring that discussions are both thorough and timely.

Clarifying Goals: Facilitators help define and clarify goals, ensuring that everyone understands the objectives of discussions or workshops.

Managing Conflicts: Facilitators address conflicts constructively, fostering resolution and maintaining a positive atmosphere within the team.

Building Team Cohesion: Facilitators cultivate a collaborative culture, enhancing teamwork, trust, and cooperation among team members.

Promoting Innovation: Facilitators encourage creative thinking and innovation by fostering an open and supportive environment for idea generation.

Tracking Progress: Facilitators help track and document progress, ensuring that action items are identified, assigned, and followed up on for successful implementation.

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF) defines a Facilitator as someone who plays an impartial role in helping groups become more effective. They should assume responsibility for the group processes, and they should not apply content expertise. They have no vested interest in the outcome, whether to be a financial gain or not.

Sam Kaine's statement was that the facilitator's role is to 'support everyone to do their best thinking.' Because, in meetings, we often have disasters, and people are not doing their best thinking, and they're not on their best behavior, so they're not getting the best results. So, my role is to help them do that, and I describe myself as a Facilitator. I work not on 'what happens in the meeting, but on how it happens, so that they get their result. As I don't have a vested interest in the outcome, I help them work out what the outcome is that they want to get towards, and that's done collaboratively with people in the room."

RHONDA SPARKS-TRANKS
Professional Facilitator
"Ordinary Meetings Don't Interest Me"

Typical Sessions Facilitators Can Help With:

Strategic Planning Workshops: Facilitators aid in developing and aligning organizational strategies, ensuring a clear and actionable plan for the future.

Team Planning and Team Building Sessions: Facilitators promote team cohesion, trust, and effective communication to enhance overall team dynamics.

Innovation and Idea Generation Workshops: Facilitators create an environment conducive to creative thinking, sparking innovation and generating new ideas.

Problem-Solving Sessions: Facilitators guide teams through identifying, analyzing, and solving complex problems, ensuring efficient and effective resolutions.

Decision-Making Meetings: Facilitators assist in decision-making processes, helping teams reach informed and timely conclusions.

Conflict Resolution Meetings: Facilitators address conflicts constructively, facilitating open communication and fostering resolution.

Training and Development Workshops: Facilitators lead interactive and engaging training sessions, ensuring effective learning and skill development.

Change Management Workshops: Facilitators assist teams in navigating organizational changes, ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining employee engagement.

Retreats and Offsite Meetings: Facilitators guide strategic discussions and team-building activities during offsite retreats to maximize effectiveness.

Project Frame, Kickoff, Review, and Business Improvement Meetings: Facilitators contribute to successful project initiation, launches, insightful project reviews, and continuous improvement efforts within the organization.



Chapter 4
Why We Need Facilitation?

Why Do We Need Facilitation?

In today's workplace, things are a bit of a mess. Teamwork is falling apart, and meetings? Well, they're not as useful as they should be – most people end up doing other stuff during them. On top of that, many folks don't know how to deal with tricky problems or make decisions that make sense. Projects also often go wrong, and success rates are pretty low. And when it comes to making changes, things get messy because not everyone affected is part of the process.

This is where facilitation comes in – it's not just a fix; it's like a superhero strategy to help organizations sort out teamwork, meetings, projects, and changes in a way that actually works. It's not a luxury; it's a must-have in today's busy and complex workplaces.

Top 5 Primary Issues Facilitators Can Help Solve:

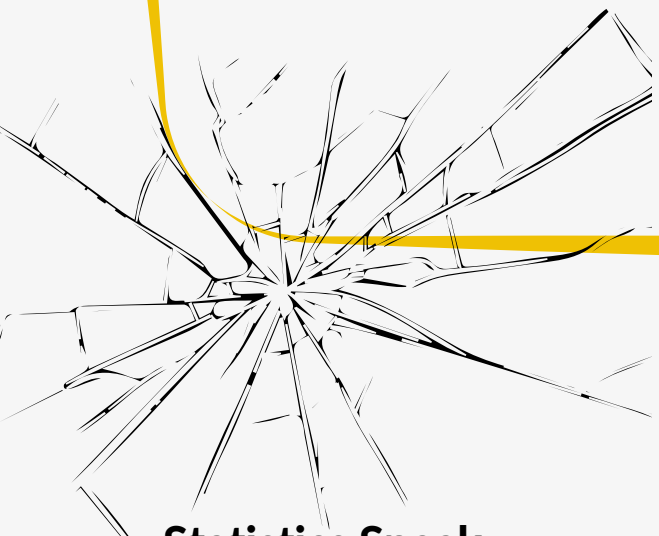




Chapter 5
Issues Facilitators Help Solve

1. Collaboration is Broken

> “
>
> Most groups do not know how to solve tough problems on their own. They do not know how to build a shared framework of understanding—they seldom even recognize its significance. They dread and discomfort and try hard to avoid it. Yet, by avoiding struggle to integrate one another’s perspectives, the members of such groups gently diminish their own potential to be effective. They need a Facilitator.
>
> **SAM KANER**



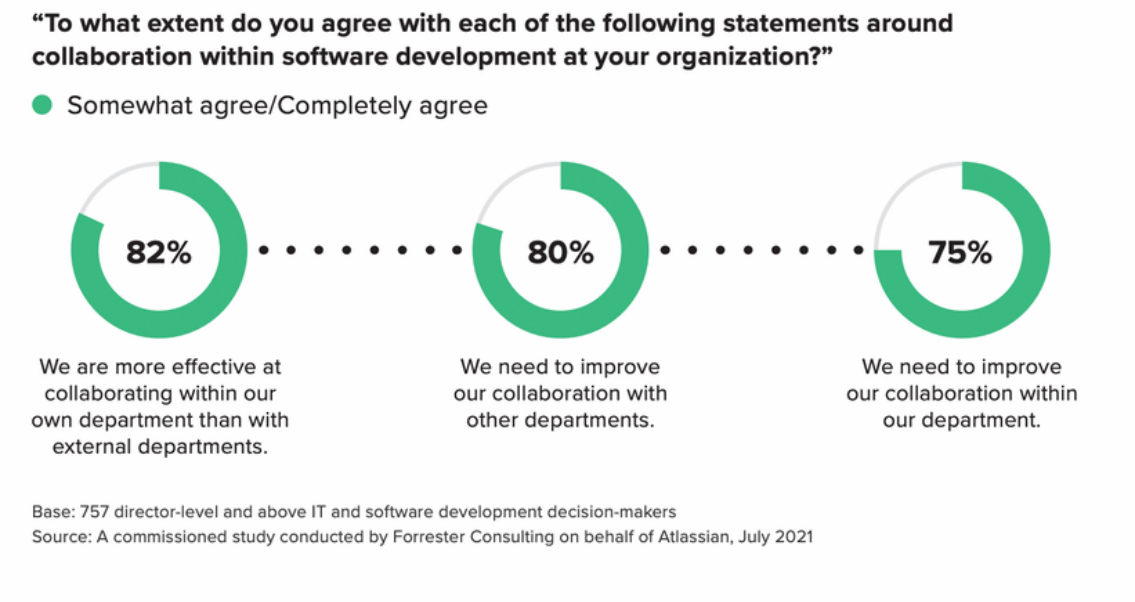
Statistics Speak:

- 41% workers in big companies have either left their jobs or thought about leaving just because the poor collaboration.
- 64% of employees claim that poor collaboration is wasting at least 3-5h or productivity each week.
- 75% of employees claim their company’s leadership could be doing more to promote collaboration within the organization.

..... and there is more:



👉 Decision Makers are aware of current shortcomings and their need to do more.



- 75% of decision-makers said they need to improve collaboration within their own department.
- 80% said they need to improve collaboration with other departments.
- 70% believe better collaboration would improve employee productivity and time savings.
- 64% believe better collaboration would improve innovation, creativity, and engagement.
- 61% believe better collaboration would improve greater business growth opportunities.
- 60% believe better collaboration would have a positive impact on employee morale.

Unlocking The Value Of Open Collaboration To Drive Enterprise Agility, Forrester Research, 2021

How Facilitators Can Help With Collaboration

Facilitators are like the fix-it experts for teamwork that's not going so well. They guide talks, making sure everyone gets a say and things stay on track. They create an open and safe space for sharing ideas and problems. When things get tricky, they're the go-to people for process solutions. Decisions become easier with them around, and they make sure meetings don't waste time.

2. Ineffective Meetings

There are over 25 million meetings every day in the United States and 85 million worldwide and most of them do not work.

Useless Meetings Waste Time and $100 Million a Year for Big Companies

Employees spend an enormous 18 hours a week on average in meetings. Attending non-critical meetings wastes approximately $25,000 per employee annually, which results in over $100 million a year in waste for any organization with more than 5,000 employees. Crazy, right?

HBR surveyed 182 senior managers in a range of industries and found that:

- 71% of senior managers said meetings are unproductive and inefficient.
- 65% said meetings keep them from completing their own work.
- 70% of workers are more willing to attend a meeting if food was served
- 58% of Americans would rather go to a doctors appointment than a work meeting
- 25% would rather sit in traffic
- 17% would rather attend jury duty

Stop the Meeting Madness, Harvard Business Review, 2017

Some typical issues experienced during meetings include:

- Lack of Focus
- Poor Time Management
- Ineffective Communication
- Dominant Participants
- Lack of Engagement
- Unclear Objectives
- Inadequate Preparation
- Technology Issues
- Resistance to Change
- Decision-Making Challenges



HBR Research suggests that working in silos and poor cross-functional collaboration might cost a company almost $8,000.00 per day in wasteful expenses!



How Facilitators Can Help to Make Meetings Productive

Facilitators can design and lead effective meetings by setting clear expectations, objectives, creating an agenda, managing time effectively, encouraging participation, and ensuring that discussions lead to actionable outcomes.

They help to ensure that meetings are necessary, purposeful, and align with the goals of the team or organization. This way, time is spent wisely, and everyone is involved and focused on discussions that truly matter, avoiding unnecessary and time-wasting gatherings.

3. Disengaged Employees

Employee engagement has reached its lowest level since 2015, according to a new survey released by research firm Gallup. Only 36% of Employees Are Engaged in the Workplace! According to the latest Gallup report, 51% of employees are disengaged in the workplace, while 13% are actively disengaged.

Addressing the issue of disengaged employees is paramount for organizations seeking sustained success. When employees lack engagement, the workplace dynamic falters, leading to decreased productivity, lower morale, and heightened turnover rates. Disengaged team members often feel disconnected from their work, resulting in reduced commitment to organizational goals and a potential decline in mental health and overall performance.

This disengagement not only affects individual employees but has a ripple effect on the entire team, stifling collaboration and innovation.

> In order for organizations to be as successful as they could be, they must be able to “elicit, harness, and focus the vast intellectual capital and goodwill resident in their members, employees, and stakeholders.”
>
> **SAM KANER**

How Facilitators Can Help With Employees Engagement

Facilitators are instrumental in re-engaging employees by creating interactive workshops that encourage communication and collaboration. Through team-building activities and constructive feedback sessions, they foster positive relationships and a culture of continuous improvement. Aligning individual and team goals with organizational objectives, facilitators help employees understand the impact of their contributions. ,

4. People Lack Ownership Over Solution

The issue of people lacking ownership over solutions, particularly when they are not involved in the development process, poses a significant problem within organizations. When individuals are excluded from the decision-making and problem-solving stages, they may feel disconnected and disengaged from the outcomes. This lack of involvement often leads to a sense of detachment and a diminished commitment to the proposed solutions.

Without ownership, individuals are less likely to invest their time, energy, and creativity in implementing and sustaining these solutions. Moreover, excluding diverse perspectives in the development phase can result in solutions that are incomplete, ineffective, or fail to address the unique needs of the entire team or organization. Ultimately, the absence of ownership diminishes the collective responsibility for the success of solutions, hindering collaboration, innovation, and the overall effectiveness of the organization.

> FACILITATION is the essential ingredient to increasing the effectiveness of group meetings. Facilitators can enable groups to “work smarter, harder, deeper, and faster.
>
> **SAM KANER**

How Facilitators Can Help With Creating Ownership?

Facilitators serve as key architects in mitigating the challenge of individuals lacking ownership over solutions when excluded from the development process. By fostering inclusive decision-making, they ensure that all team members contribute to shaping solutions. Facilitators create spaces for open dialogue, allowing diverse perspectives to surface, leading to more comprehensive and effective solutions. Through collaborative problem-solving techniques, they tap into the collective intelligence of the group, fostering a shared responsibility for the outcomes.

4. Poorly Framed Projects or Initiatives

One big reason projects (or initiatives) often go wrong is that they don't get off to a good start. Imagine building a house without a proper blueprint or plan—it's likely to end up a mess. The same goes for projects. When they aren't well thought out from the idea stage, they're more likely to fail during execution.

2022 Studies from TeamStage, reveal that **70% of all projects fail.**

If you don't figure out what you're doing, why, what choices you need to make and how you're going to do it right from the beginning, you're more likely to run into problems later on. So, taking the time to plan things out properly in the early stages, a way before the execution, can make a big difference in whether a project succeeds or not.

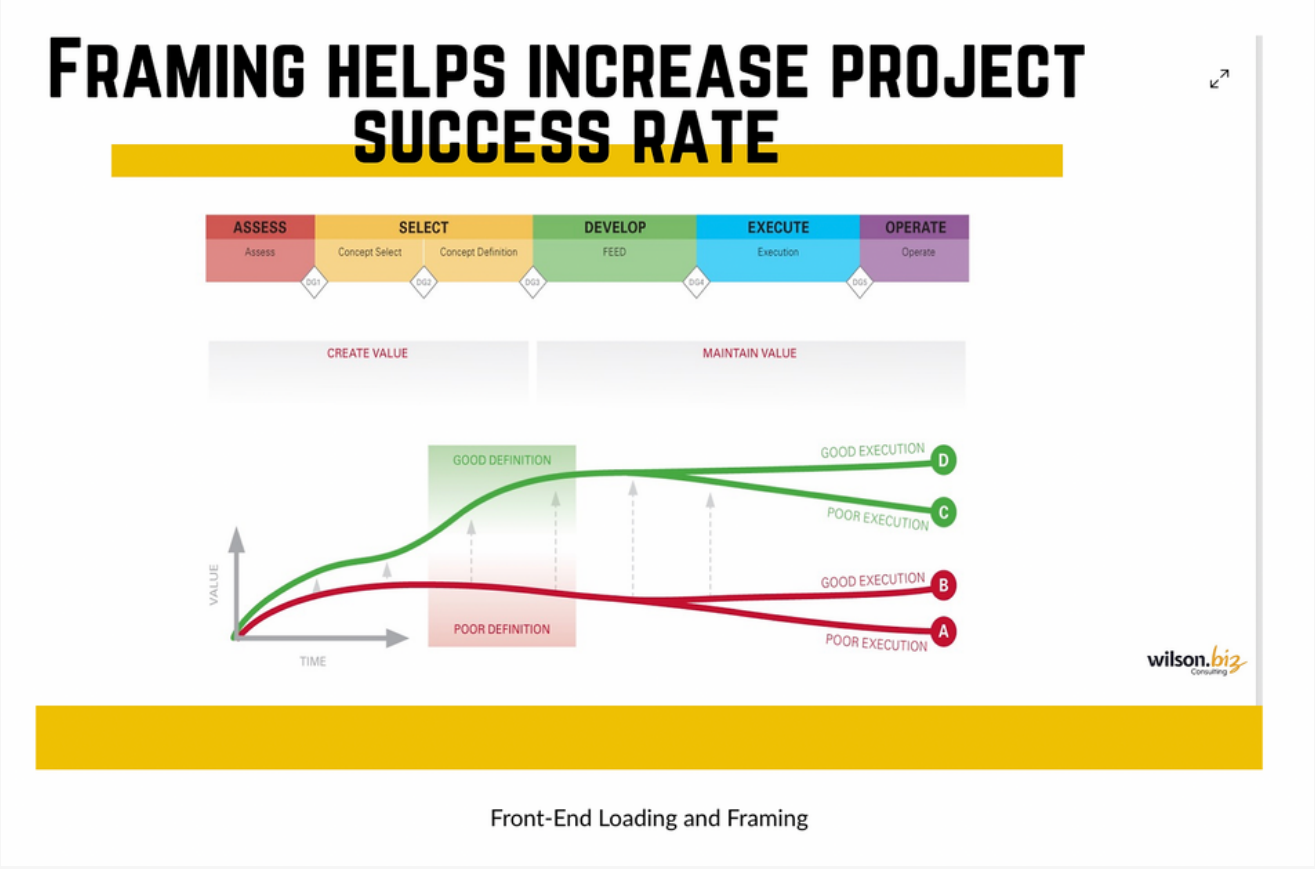


In a Resource Sector, Front-End Loading is the work you do in the first three stages, from the Idea, to a Concept and eventually Development.

Research by Independent Project Analysis, Inc. (2011) has shown that Project Definition, or Front-End Loading (FEL), is one of the most significant drivers of project success. Well-defined projects cost less, take less time to execute, and operate better.

The majority of sources indicate direct correlation between the quality of FEL activities and the overall project success, and that typically, **a project will not be better than its front-end planning process and opportunity framing workshop is what should kick everything off.**

This chart below shows the Opportunity and Project Lifecycle with five stages and five gates. For more information about the stage gate process and opportunity framing workshops **visit our online course portal.**



Front-End Loading and Framing

How (Framing) Facilitators Can Help With Framing Projects to Ensure High Project Success Rates

Framing Facilitators guide the team through a structured process, encouraging open discussions and creative thinking. By framing the project in terms of opportunities, participants are more likely to approach challenges with a proactive mindset, fostering innovation and collaboration. Studies show that **projects with a well-defined opportunity framing process at the outset tend to have higher success rates, as teams are better aligned, motivated, and prepared to overcome obstacles.** Ultimately, these workshops help create a foundation for success by ensuring that everyone involved understands the potential benefits and is committed to achieving the project's objectives.

Other Issues Facilitators Can Help With

- **Strategic Planning Difficulties:**
  - Facilitation Solution: Facilitators assist organizations in strategic planning by leading workshops that involve current state analysis, goal-setting, risks identification and action planning. They ensure that goals and objectives are well-defined, and the organization is aligned towards a common vision.
- **Resistance to Change:**
  - Facilitation Solution: Facilitators help manage resistance to change by facilitating discussions that address concerns, providing a platform for expressing opinions, and guiding teams through processes that emphasize the positive aspects of change.
- **Inefficient Problem-Solving:**
  - Facilitation Solution: Facilitators enhance problem-solving by leading structured problem-solving sessions, encouraging creative thinking, and guiding teams through processes such as root cause analysis and solution prioritization.

In essence, facilitation is a versatile tool that can be applied to a wide range of organizational challenges. Whether it's improving meetings, framing projects, resolving conflicts, or fostering collaboration, facilitation plays a pivotal role in creating a positive and productive work environment.



Chapter 6
Building A Collaborative Culture With Facilitation

Building A Collaborative Culture -The Role Of Facilitation

Here are some examples of how organizations can build a collaborative culture:

1. Establish "Collaboration" A Key Guiding Principle (Organizational Value)

- This will emphasize the importance of collaboration in achieving organizational goals.

2. Leadership Commitment:

- Demonstrate commitment to collaboration from top leadership.
- Leaders should model collaborative behavior, emphasizing its significance through their actions and communication.

3. Create Open Channels of Communication:

- Foster transparent and open communication channels across all levels of the organization.
- Implement tools and processes that encourage sharing of ideas, feedback, and information.

4. Involve Employees in Decision-Making:

- Involve employees in decisions that affect them by inviting their input and ideas
- Implement collaborative processes for strategy development and project planning using facilitators to encourage cross-functional interactions, to break down silos and build a sense of unity.

5. Establish Clear Roles and Responsibilities:

- Clearly define roles and responsibilities within teams to avoid confusion and conflicts.
- Ensure that each team member understands their contribution to the collaborative process.

6. Invest in Employee Training:

- Provide training on collaboration skills, including effective communication, active listening, and conflict resolution.
- Equip employees with the tools and knowledge needed to collaborate successfully.

7. Recognize and Celebrate Collaborative Success:

- Acknowledge and celebrate achievements resulting from successful collaboration.
- Highlight collaboration as a core value and recognize individuals and teams that exemplify collaborative efforts.

8. Incorporate Facilitation Into Processes:

- Integrate facilitation into regular organizational processes, especially during meetings and decision-making sessions.
- Employ facilitators to guide discussions, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard, and decisions are made collaboratively.

9. Create a Safe and Inclusive Environment:

- Cultivate a culture where all voices are valued, and individuals feel safe sharing their opinions.
- Address issues of bias and inclusivity to ensure that collaboration is truly inclusive.

10. Encourage Continuous Improvement:

- Foster a culture of continuous improvement by regularly evaluating and refining all processes.
- Encourage feedback from employees and use it to make informed adjustments.

Frequent use of facilitation helps moving the organization toward a collaborative culture. It empowers teams to work together well, leveraging their collective strengths to achieve shared success.



Chapter 7
Working With A Facilitator

Your Needs

IF YOU TICK ANY OF THE BOXES, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER WORKING WITH A FACILITATOR:

- [ ] You and your team are looking for a clear and compelling vision and a plan
- [ ] You and your team are looking for a solution to a new or existing problem, and more than one perspective is needed
- [ ] You and your team are looking to have an open and honest conversation about something that has happened
- [ ] You and your team are looking for a new strategic plan as a result of a change
- [ ] You and your team want to frame an opportunity, an initiative, or an idea
- [ ] You and your team want to better understand a complex issue wherein different people hold different parts of the puzzle or have different expertise
- [ ] You and your stakeholders are looking for common ground in order to develop good partnerships with other stakeholders
- [ ] You and your stakeholders are looking for new ways to achieve better results
- [ ] You and your stakeholders are about to make an important decision
- [ ] You and your team want better results, more engagement, more joy and better relationships.

How To Work With A Facilitator?

Working with a facilitator typically involves five key phases, each contributing to a successful collaboration tailored to meet the specific needs of the client:



Clarity Session:

A clarity session is to understand the client's goals, challenges, and expectations. This phase allows the facilitator to gain insights into the organization's dynamics, identify key stakeholders, and establish a clear understanding of the objectives to be addressed during the facilitation engagement.



Contracting:

Following the clarity session, the contracting phase takes place. This involves formalizing the agreement between the facilitator and the client, clarifying roles, expectations, and the scope of the workshop. It establishes a shared understanding of the facilitator's role, the client's goals, and the desired outcomes, ensuring alignment before moving forward.



Design Stage:

Here, a facilitator creates a customized plan, incorporating the identified goals and objectives. This phase involves developing a structured agenda, selecting appropriate techniques, and considering the specific needs of the participants. The design stage ensures that the facilitation process is tailored to address the unique challenges and opportunities of the client.



Facilitation Delivery:

The facilitation delivery phase is the active execution of the plan. The facilitator employs various techniques to guide discussions, encourage collaboration, and ensure that the workshop stays on track. This stage involves dynamic interaction with participants, adapting to emerging needs, and fostering an environment conducive to productive dialogue and problem-solving.



Workshop Outcome Summary + Debrief:

As the facilitation engagement concludes, a workshop outcome summary and debriefing session take place. The facilitator provides a concise summary of the key insights, decisions, and actions. This phase allows participants to reflect on the outcomes, ensuring clarity on the path forward. Additionally, the debrief provides an opportunity for constructive feedback, enabling continuous improvement in future facilitation efforts.

5 P's of Preparation

- **Purpose.** Why are you holding this session? What are the key objectives?
- **Product.** What do we need to have when we are done? What results do you want to achieve at the end?
- **Participants.** Who needs to be involved, and what are their roles and perspectives?
- **Probably Issues.** What are the concerns that will likely arise? What are the "gotchas" that could prevent us from creating the product and achieving the purpose?
- **Process.** What steps should we take during the meeting to achieve the purpose, givens the product desired, the participants, and the probably issues we will face?

Source: The Secrets of Facilitation by Michael Wilkinson

Critical Success Factors for Effective Workshops

Clear Goals: Work with the workshop leaders to make sure everyone knows what the workshop is supposed to achieve.

Choose the Right People: Pick participants who really need to be there and can contribute to the workshop's goals.

Spread the Word: Make sure everyone invited knows about the workshop, what's going to happen, and why it's important.

Provide what's Needed: Get everything ready - the place, the materials, the tech stuff. Make sure everyone has what they need.

Get People Ready: Tell participants what to expect and what they should think about before the workshop. Get them ready to be part of things.

Get the Word Out: Make sure everyone knows what's going on, where they need to be, and what they should bring.

Listen to Feedback: Pay attention to what people say during and after the workshop. What worked? What could be better? Use that feedback to make things even better next time.

Keep the Momentum Going: Make a plan for what happens after the workshop. How will people keep using what they learned?

Stick to the Budget: Figure out how much everything will cost and make sure there's enough money set aside for it all.

Get Involved: Be a part of the workshop, participate in discussions, and encourage others to do the same. Your active involvement sets the tone.

Invest Time and Effort: Show that you're serious about the workshop's success by putting in the time and effort needed. Be present, engaged, and encourage others to do the same.

By keeping these things in mind, you're helping to make sure the workshop goes well and achieves what it's meant to.

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“Great things in business are never done by one person, they’re always done by a team of people.”

