

'FAC' Facilitation Model

Background: As early as 1991 Wayne Vick discovered that facilitation was the key to effective groups and organizations. It was not so much that facilitation was required but that people needed someone to show them the way to success. Facilitators seemed to be the key role. He began taking courses and studying books of facilitation looking for a "process model" to use in facilitation. Facilitation is after all the artful use of a process to make group work easy. The most useful model he found was Leadership Strategies technique driven model for the *Effective Facilitator* course.

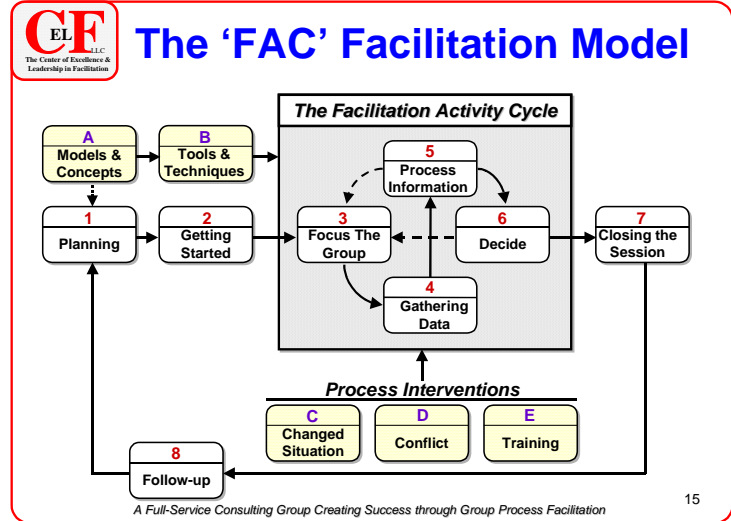
Three essential concerns were identified that led to the development of this model:

1. Facilitation is a process that should be defined by a process model.
2. Most models depend too much on the technique utilized to inadequately define the process.
3. Models, concepts, tools and techniques employed were almost always transparent or assumed in these models.

The 'FAC' Facilitation model was developed, by Wayne Vick and Charles Markert of the Dynamic Leadership Consulting Group, Inc. (formerly the Center of Excellence and Leadership in Facilitation, LLC) beginning in 2001, to address these three concerns.

In addition to the years of individual development, construction of the model took several months of research. During that period they examined every major book on facilitation in their libraries in two ways. First, they looked for the model the author used to describe facilitation. Second, they broke down all the major discussion points of the book into important elements.

Wayne describes facilitation as "*an artfully applied process interrupted by human interaction*". The interruption occurs during



the Facilitation Activity Cycle (FAC). After some considerable deliberation, Charles hit on the idea used for the current model.

Facilitation Activity Cycle: is based on the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle introduced by Dr. Walter Shewhart and popularized by Dr. W. Edwards Deming. It has been adapted for use in facilitation and it recognizes that an activity usually has at least four parts represented by steps 3 through 6. With this in place the 'process interventions' were identified to address the interruptions.

Application: The model has been operationalized through the DLCCG "*Concepts and Practices of Group Facilitation*" course and through their Facilitation Planning Worksheets. Following is a basic description of each step:

Step 1: Planning: Planning for Success is the first step of the facilitation model and, understandably, a broad range of issues should be covered. This is the intake that most facilitators or consultants use check- or worksheets for. This includes the sponsor interview, participant identification, and event logistics. It generally includes everything you do in preparation for an event up to the morning the event begins.

Facilitator's Body of Knowledge Research Project

Step 2: Getting Started: This is the point of the event from the time a facilitator walks into the room until they are ready to get started on the first effective agenda item. It covers things like room set up and organization, prop placement, and greeting the participants. It also covers the kick-off items like the Sponsor opening, Facilitator's welcome, purpose, objectives and administrative activities.

The nature of the model makes several things the facilitator does implicit. This means that while we explicitly conduct an activity with a group, implicitly we are doing things behind the activity that we don't always want, or need, to make clear. The implicit and explicit nature of our work shows that the Facilitation Activity Cycle has two parallel focuses. One is openly based on helping the group to efficiently work through the activity and another that is watching for, acting and intervening as required to keep the group effective.

Step 3: Focus the Group: relates to Plan. This is the transitional step for when you pull the team together and review the path you have been on, set the next part of the path, and tell them about the destination. This includes the purpose and instructions for the next activity. This step is fairly consistent in nearly all activities.

Step 4: Gathering Data: relates to the Do part of the PDSA. This step builds the base of information that the group works with. Gathering data can itself be a complete facilitated activity or part of a larger activity that employs tools and techniques to gather the data.

Step 5: Process Information: relates to the Study part of the PDSA. It involves the discussion and manipulation of the data by the group. Often the group uses tools and techniques to process the information into understandable 'chunks'.

Step 6: Decide: relates to the Act part of the PDSA. This step may require a significant

level of activity using tools and techniques to help the group arrive at a decision or it could be just a simple acceptance of the work.

Step 7: Closing the Session: This is a process that takes a minimum amount of time and should almost never change. Once you figure out the process 'just do it' and be consistent. It includes reviewing the accomplishments and session objectives, reviewing and clearing personal expectations, reviewing and clearing parking boards, and conducting an evaluation.

Step 8: Follow-up: This step is about completing on your agreements. It includes the facilitator reflecting on their results, producing and delivering any required reports, invoicing and follow-up with the client.

A: Models & Concepts: These are the useful organizing structures we recognize and use to structure our thinking and activities.

B: Tools & Techniques: Tools are physical structures we use to engage groups. Techniques are ways we organize and use those tools.

We simplified process interventions into three basic groups:

C: Changed Situation: At any point in an activity, where the plan and the participants diverge from what was know the facilitator may have to interrupt to realign.

D: Conflict: These interventions are used when the human dynamics interferes with the process regardless of the level.

E: Training: At any point in the event a facilitator may have to stop the progress to conduct training to ensure the group is capable of continuing. This intervention may be conducted by anyone with the knowledge or skills.

Resources:

Vick, Wayne & Markert, Charles: "**Concepts & Practices of Group Facilitation**" course book.

<http://www.FacilitationCenter.com>