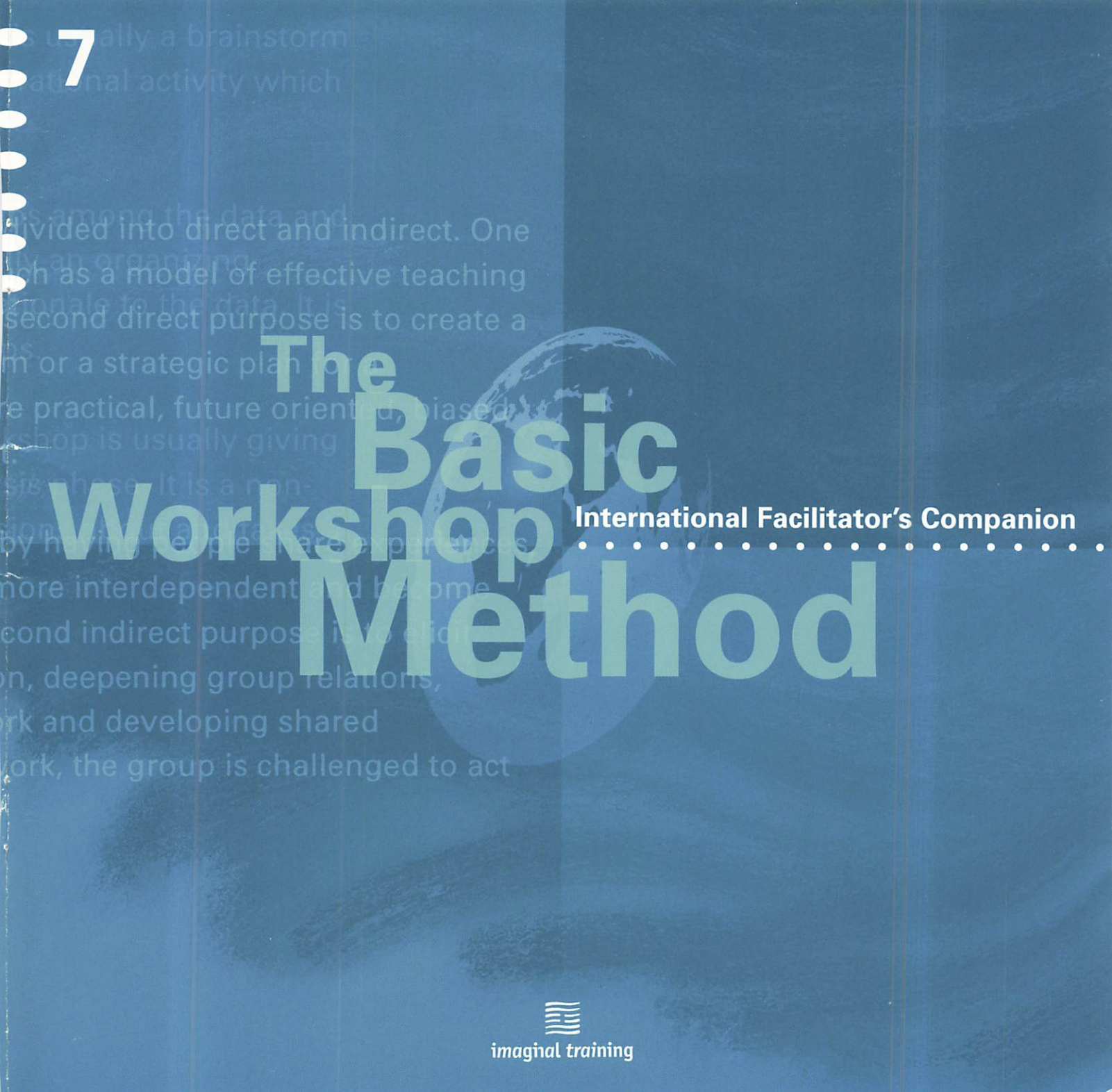




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The Basic Workshop Method

International Facilitator's Companion

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imaginal training

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The Theory

Section One: The Theory

The Workshop Method is based on the assumption that any group that works together shares common experiences and images. At the same time there are individual differences in the importance and meaning of these experiences. It is possible to build a corporate understanding of these experiences by sharing both the common and the dissimilar experiences, images and understandings. The Workshop Method uses the experiences and ideas of the group to learn.

Purposes

The Workshop Method enables people to see new relationships. It helps a group work cooperatively. It is intended to enable a group to build a model and come to a decision. It is a tool for creating a polylogue (a many-sided discussion).

The purposes of a workshop can be divided into direct and indirect.

One direct purpose is building a model such as a model of effective teaching or a model of good management. A second direct purpose is to create a plan, such as a project plan for a team or a strategic plan for a department. Effective group plans are practical, future oriented, biased toward action and elicit commitment.

Indirectly, a workshop builds teams by having people share experiences, take corporate responsibility, grow more interdependent and become aware of their shared relations. A second indirect purpose is to elicit motivity by creating a common vision, deepening group relations, developing a broader context for work and developing shared commitment. In the process of the work, the group is challenged to act on their decisions.



2

The Process

Section Two: The Process

Dynamics

The dynamics of a workshop are the context, gathering information, analyzing data, determining the information's importance and closing.

The context creates the focus of the workshop and enables people to become a group. It uses rational thinking processes and creates boundaries for the meeting.

The information gathering phase of the workshop is usually a brainstorm where ideas and insights are shared. This is a non-rational activity which increases creativity.

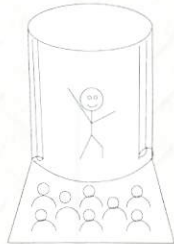
The analysis phase of a workshop sees relationships among the data and between the data and other information. It is usually an organizing process which reveals or creates the underlying rationale to the data. It is a rational process that strengthens the relationships.

The determining the importance phase of the workshop is usually giving names to the relationships developed in the analysis phase. It is a non-rational process in which the group draws conclusions about and takes a stance toward the information.

The closing ends the workshop, affirms the work, has the group reflect on the workshop's implications and points to future steps.

These dynamics are usually structured as an Introduction; Movement I, brainstorming; Movement II, organizing data; Movement III, naming the organized clusters of data; and a Conclusion. These same dynamics can be used in other methods such as the Case Study Method.

Elements of a Workshop



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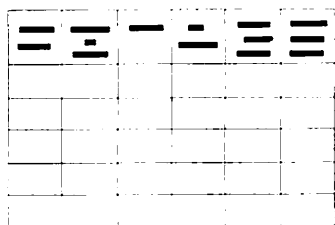


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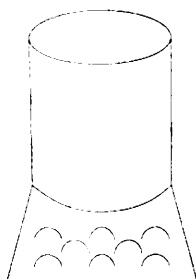
The **Context** sets the stage by focusing the group on the issue it is dealing with, explains the product of the workshop and outlines the process. It requires a clear, precise and competent style. Problems in the context are fuzziness in instructions, or in stating the issue the workshop is about. The keys to the context are getting the group to agree to work. Clear instructions are important for the group to know what is going to happen and why it is going to happen. They need a clear understanding of the scope and focus of the workshop.

The second step is the **brainstorm**. The intent of the brainstorm is to generate ideas especially drawing on the subconscious of the group. The facilitation style during the brainstorm is one of affirmation. The problem in the brainstorm step is discussing or criticizing ideas by the facilitator or the group. Any criticism or negative feedback at this point during the workshop will tend to stop the creative processes. The keys to brainstorming are creating and keeping a clear focus, listing a large number of ideas, limiting the amount of work time, having everyone participate, and affirming all answers.

The third step is the **organization** of the brainstormed ideas. The organizing step of the workshop is to discover or create relationships between all of the brainstormed data. The style during the organizing step is systematic and practical. The problem in the organizing step is not creating agreement within the group about how things are being put together. The keys to organizing, relating internally and externally, are having a clear organizing principle, keeping clusters unnamed early in order to avoid making a decision too soon, keeping the organization loose at the beginning, using question sequences that facilitate openness.



The fourth step is **naming** the components or relationships. The naming step states the new reality giving it a clear and motivating name and by doing so an agreement is reached. The naming step needs a style of demanding excellence and one that moves toward closure. If the titles are too abstract in the naming step, they can mean nothing at a later date. The keys to naming are having a naming principle, being as specific as possible in relation to the data, being consistent with the other names and using poetic (memorable) phrases if possible.



The **conclusion** confirms the work of the group by restating the decision, reflects on the workshop and clarifies the next steps. The conclusion step needs an informal style that affirms the work of the group. The problem in the conclusion is not looking toward the next steps in the group but looking to the past. The keys to the conclusion are ensuring that the meeting ends in a satisfactory way, the work of the group is affirmed, a story of the significance of the meeting is stated explicitly or implicitly by the group reflecting on the workshop or the facilitator stating it in some way, and the next steps are clear and agreed to by the group.

The effective leading of a workshop is by facilitation where questions are inviting, open-ended, and encourage participation. The style of the leader is affirmative. He/she holds an appropriate balance between poetic and logical and between rational and non-rational.

The background is a photograph of a stone wall made of irregular, light-colored stones. A large, bold, green number '3' is superimposed on the left side of the image. To the right of the number, the word 'Examples' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A thick black horizontal line is positioned directly beneath the word 'Examples'.

3

Examples

Qualities of a Good Manager Workshop

Rational Objective: To demonstrate the method of building a rational, thought through model.

Existential Aim: To experience the power of careful thinking

Step	Procedure	Time
Context	1 <i>Today we want to go through the process of doing a workshop as a group. Like any tool the user becomes better and better at using it by using it a great deal, so the best way of becoming better at this method is to use it over and over.</i> 2 <i>We want to do a workshop on the qualities of a good manager.</i> 3 <i>We will do this in 3 major steps. We will brainstorm ideas. We will organize these ideas into a rational form. We will then write sentences about the content of the form.</i> 4 <i>A brainstorm is used to generate ideas beyond those you would normally have if you thought about a subject. Two things are needed: limited time and the need for a lot of items. This forces the sub-conscious to throw ideas into the conscious mind. I want you to list everything that comes to mind whether it seems related to the topic or not.</i> 5 <i>At any time in the process of doing the workshop you may think of illustrations, board images, stories or examples. You should note them down as they come to mind.</i>	
Movements		
Conclusion	See below	

Qualities of a Good Manager Workshop

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Time
Context	See above	
Movements I	Brainstorm: <i>I want each of you to take a piece of paper and number it down 1-45. You have 5 minutes to list as many items on the qualities of a good manager as you can. Aim for 45.</i> <i>(After 5 min.) We are now going to list these qualities on the board. We want to list all of them if we can. I want you to mark the 5 most clear items on your list. (Note: The number of items selected as most clear varies depending on the number of people in the group. You want to get 10 to 20 percent of the data out in this round.)</i> <i>(Go around the room getting one item per person and putting them on the board. Keep doing this until each of the 5 items are up.)</i> <i>I want you to mark the 5 best items on your list, not on the board.</i> <i>(Go around the room getting all five items from each person.)</i> <i>I want you to look at your list and select the 5 most different items.</i> <i>(Ask for anyone to add items from his/her 5. Ask each person for his/her 5 items.)</i> <i>(If there is any room left on the board, ask people for additional items until the board is filled.)</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Qualities of a Good Manager Workshop

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Time
Context	See above	
Movements II	Organizing the data 1 <i>We want to organize these items into the major categories.</i> 2 <i>First we will just mark each similar item with a symbol →, ▲, #, \$, + etc. Which items seem most related? (Mark with a symbol.)</i> 3 <i>(When you have 5 or 6 symbols out, you can ask for names) What are the triangles about? or What is a holding name we could give them? (Put the symbols on a flip chart and put the holding names next to them.)</i> 4 <i>(Ask if there are different categories that have not been named.) Are there any other different categories that go together?</i> 5 <i>(When there seem to be no new categories coming out of the group put each unmarked item into categories or create new categories.) Let's start with the items left over. Beginning with the first unmarked item which category does this go with? (If there is a lot of disagreement, you can do one of three things. If there is an argument about it going into two different items and you can see a reason for both, mark it with both symbols. If it is unclear what category it should go in, ask if it goes into a new area using a new symbol. If it is unclear and there are a lot of other items you can leave it to be decided later.)</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Qualities of a Good Manager Workshop

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Time
Context	See above	
Movements III	Naming 1 (When every item is in a category then give clear names.) <i>We want to give these names. We will use the format adjective noun to name them. What is this category about? (This is the noun, for example: leader, coach, administrator or colleague.) What kind of is a good manager? (Here you are after an adjective, for example: visionary leader, or inspiring coach etc. Avoid too vague or general names like good leader).</i> 2 (Continue to do this until all categories have names.) 3 <i>We will divide into teams, one for each of the categories. You will be responsible for writing a clear sentence or two describing this quality. You should use all of the information on the board marked by the symbols for your category. You may find that new ideas come up as you are working; add these to your list. Are there any questions? You have 15 minutes to do this. When you are done please put them on the form at the front of the room. (If there are too many categories for the number of teams you may want to give each team 2 or 3 categories.)</i> 4 (When the teams are finished, do a brief reflection.) <i>I would like for each team to read their sentences for each category.</i>	
Conclusion	See below	

Qualities of a Good Manager Workshop

Rational Objective: See above

Existential Aim: See above

Step	Procedure	Time
Context	See above	
Movements III	5 (If there is time you can ask the following questions.) ■ <i>What words or phrases did you hear?</i> ■ <i>Where did you experience excitement about the sentences?</i> ■ <i>For any of the points can you think of an illustration or story that makes the point?</i>	
Conclusion	Reflection 1 <i>We want to reflect a little on the process. What are some of the steps we went through to do this workshop?</i> 2 <i>What seemed to be helpful?</i> 3 <i>What was unhelpful?</i> 4 <i>What is this process?</i> Closing 1 <i>We have done a lot of work this morning and we will now go to lunch. Are there any other announcements?</i>	



4 When Appropriate

Section Four: When Appropriate

A workshop is a method for enabling a group to make real decisions. It works when the group shares some common concern. The more concrete the concern the better the effect of the workshop. The more pressing the need the better the workshop.

Workshops enable a group to develop creative solutions to non-standard problems.

Groups that share a vague or abstract concern tend to develop vague or abstract products in workshops.

It is not effective to use a workshop to impose an idea or solution. A workshop is based on people participating in the decisions if the workshop and those who participate in the workshop are those who implement the plan or model.

It is not appropriate to use a workshop when there is no issue. The workshop method is basically a problem solving method. If there is no problem, there is no reason to use the method. This seems obvious but frequently solutions to pseudo-problems are sought.

A related inappropriate use of the method is solving problems where everyone knows the solution, where no creativity or real thinking is required. Where there are existing procedures for developing solutions or standard solutions to problems, using a workshop leads to demotivation or cynicism.



5

How to Develop

Section Five: How to Develop a Workshop

The Steps to creating a workshop are determining the focus, developing the process, creating the framework and refining the workshop.

Determining the focus

Determining the focus of the workshop is stating in concrete terms the topic, clarifying who the audience is, writing the rational objective by stating what the product is intended to be and writing the existential aim by suggesting what the mood of the workshop is intended to be.

Topic

The more concrete and specific the topic of the workshop is, the more effective the workshop will be. This is best done by creating a focus question. A focus question is the topic in a question form. It should include the topic, the concern or issue with the topic, the group that will be in the workshop and the time frame in which the plan or model will work. Write out the focus question as clearly as possible.

Audience

By audience I mean the people who will be in the workshop. Several factors influence the dynamics of the workshop, age, ratio of men and women, level of education, level of concern with the issue being dealt with, reasons for participating, other issues they are worried about, etc. If possible find out who is coming to the workshop and as much information about each person as possible.

Rational Objective

The rational objective is the product of the workshop. This is not the content of the workshop but the form of the results of the workshop. For example, a workshop might result in a 90 day plan for a team with assignments, when actions will be accomplished, and how they will be done. It might be a list of qualities as in the example workshop. Write out for yourself what the end product should look like.

Existential Aim

The existential aim of a workshop is the mood or emotional tone of a workshop. Every social event has a mood and it is the responsibility of the facilitator to decide what is necessary to accomplish the work of the program. It is not possible to control this but it is possible to influence it. A financial workshop might want as its existential aim for the group to experience being responsible for the financial health of the organization.

Developing the process

Developing the process of the workshop is deciding the broad dynamics of the whole workshop, stating the movements, writing a draft of the steps and finalizing the procedures.

Information Gathering

The most common way of doing this step is by brainstorming. Brainstorming always begins with individual work. Teams can be used to select material from the individual's work.

A small number of items per person, say 5 to 10 items, will tend to result in a shallow model. Twenty to fifty items per participant adds richness to the brainstorm and will tend to produce a better model or plan.

Decide how much information should be generated. Normally a facilitator can organize from 100 to 350 items in an hour and a half or two hours.

Individual Brainstorm

If there are 10 people in the workshop you would ask them to brainstorm 25 or 30 items. You might say, "Take a sheet of paper and number the lines 1 to 25. You have 5 minutes to do this." For a group of five people you would ask them to brainstorm 50 items.

The Use of Teams

The size of the group and the amount of time will determine whether or not teams will be used. Small groups, under fifteen participants, do not need to have teams. Workshops of more than twenty persons will require teams. One constraint for the use of teams has to do with the amount of data generated by the group. If each individual in a group of 15 people brainstorms 10 items (a small number for a brainstorm which can have 50 or more items per participant) the facilitator will have to deal with 150 items in the organizing step. Workshops of less than two hours should not use teams because of the logistics of moving to and from team spaces. The use of teams also requires an additional step.

If you decide to use teams, you have to decide how many teams and how many items each team will bring back to the plenary. Normally four or five teams are used. Four teams can bring back 25 items to the plenary which would mean that a total of 125 items would be dealt with during the plenary.

It is best to have individuals do their own brainstorm and then have the teams select from their members' brainstorm the best items. You will need to define what you mean by best, this could be "the most practical", or "the most innovative" or "the most concrete".

You might say after the individual brainstorm and you have designated the teams, "Each team is to list the two most practical items from each member. Put them on a white board or flip over sheet. Eliminate any duplicates. Ask if there are any more practical items that should be added to the list. Again check for duplicates. Then decide which 25 items are the most practical (or whatever criteria you are using: innovative, clear, or easiest to implement). Give each item a two or three word title and put your list on a new flip over sheet and each item on an A5 card to be presented at the plenary."

Organizing

There are 3 basic ways of organizing material; a Normal Organization, Cross-Organization and Intuitive Organization.

Whichever method is used, crucial to effective clustering of items is the organizing principle. An organizing principle defines the criteria by which the material will be put together. The organizing principle should be used throughout the organizing phase of the workshop. *For example if your group brainstorms kinds of fruits, they can be organized in several ways: color, shape, kinds of seeds, native habitat, or taste, to name a few. If you start organizing by shape and then shift to color, the results will be meaningless.*

In preparing the workshop the facilitator should consider what kind of categories he or she would expect to emerge in the process. Visions are organized by common elements, contradictions by common root causes, proposals by common intentions (What do we intend to happen?), tactics by common activities, etc. These are the organizing principle of these workshops.

1 Normal Organizing

This is the most common and usually produces good results. It takes more time than any of the other types. The brainstormed items are more carefully considered. Items can be discussed a bit more.

The process is to have people put each of the brainstormed items on a sheet. The sheets are then gathered and put on the wall or white board. While they are being put up, the facilitator asks if the item being discussed is related to any other items. If it is related to an item already up the sheet is placed near the related item. If it is not it is put by itself.

Post-its, sheets of paper or magnetic hexagons can be used to put items on. Their size depends on the size of the group. You want everyone to

read the paper from where they are seated if possible. Three or four people can sit around a table with A6 or even A7 sheets. For larger groups A5 or A4 sheets should be used.

Ways of Physically Arranging sheets

In this type of organizing there are three ways of arranging the material; free form, in columns and in boxes.

The column method is the most common, is useful for workshops generating 75 to 150 items. It tends to encourage more systematic and rational results. 10 to 12 columns wide enough to hold the sheets of paper are drawn on the board. Symbols are put on the top of the column. The facilitator puts new items in new unused columns and similar items in the same column.

The free form method is the next most common and can be used for the same number of items. It does tend to result in more intuitive results. The facilitator puts new items any place on the board and places items that are similar or the same near or on top of an existing item.

The boxes method is the least common and is best used when large numbers of items (200 to 500) are generated in the workshop. The facilitator draws boxes the size of the sheets being used on the board. The facilitator initially puts new items in columns but as the organizing process goes on, boxes are joined together and items put on top of each other.

Rounds

When organizing, a few items from each person or team are asked for and put on the board, then a few more items are asked for and put up. Each series of asking for items and putting on the board is a round. The number of rounds depends on the number of items being organized and the amount of time available.

When asking for brainstorm items you should limit the number to less than twenty or twenty-five items per round.

In the early rounds the organizing should be loose, only items that have very similar wording or are identical should be put next to each other. Items can be moved later. If the organization is too tight at the beginning, there is a tendency to create a few large abstract categories. In the second, third and perhaps fourth round, you want to ask for items that are different from the ones on the board. When from 1/3 to 1/2 of the potential material is on the board the naming process begins by giving holding names.

Tabulating

When holding names have been given and all of the unique items have been put up then a tabulation process can begin. Participants are asked to take the rest of their items and put symbols next to them on the cards. If there is disagreement about where the items should go or if it is not clear or it could go in more than one category a question mark (?) is put on the card.

The facilitator puts a chart on a flip chart with the team names and a total column across the top and the symbols of the categories plus a question mark down the side. Teams fill in their column. Usually there are a few symbols with a large number of items to be added.

When the group has completed this work the facilitator asks for the cards marked with a question mark. These are put into categories directly or if there is difficulty see the *Problems in Organizing* section.

The largest cluster is dealt with next. The next largest category is dealt with and so on until all of the symbols with a large number of items are put on the board. If there are categories with a high percentage of cards see the *Problems in Organizing* section.

2 Cross-Organizing

This method can be done a bit faster than the method used above and slower than Intuitive Organizing.

The process of Cross-Organizing is basically listing individual items on the board or on flip chart sheets and in the organizing phase the list(s) is/are checked for similar items. These are marked with a symbol. When all the items are marked the symbol groups with similar items are named.

Symbols

We try to use relatively neutral symbols that do not imply a ranking or any better or worse relationship. Thus we do not use a, b, c, etc. or 1, 2, 3, etc. We tend to use •, -, ○, □, †, ⊗, △, ✓, ▲, →, ∞, =, ≠, △, ★, ||, ⊕ etc. Having a list in your head or even on a sheet of paper is helpful. You do not have to think up the 10th symbol on the spot.

With Teams

Teams are asked to produce a list of 20 - 30 items and these are put on flip chart sheets. The words need to be written in large letters so that everyone can read them. These sheets are put next to each other in front of the room.

Each team reads their list out loud. The facilitator now explains the organizing principle. The facilitator asks, "Which items are identical?" If two items are not really identical, the facilitator can say, "Let's keep these apart for now and we can put them together later. At this point we want truly identical items." The facilitator marks identical items with different symbols.

The facilitator asks for items that are similar according to the organizing principle. At this point the organizing principle can be explained again. You want to mark with the same symbol closely related items. When all

of the obviously related items are marked with the same symbols start with the first unmarked item on the list. The facilitator asks, "What symbol does this item go with?" If there is no obvious answer, or there is real disagreement or if by putting the item with the symbol the category becomes too vague or abstract, the facilitator can mark it with a new symbol or skip it and come back to it later when all of the other items are marked.

When all of the items are marked, go to naming.

3 Intuitive Organizing

Intuitive Organizing is the fastest of the methods and can lead to good results if there are not many items to be considered. It is a difficult process if there are more than 25 or 30 items. The group is asked to remember categories as all of the items are read. It can lead to abstract categories.

The Intuitive Organizing process is basically reading the brainstormed items out loud, asking the group what are categories these items could be grouped into, and checking that all the items are used.

The brainstormed items need to be listed on sheets of paper or on the board. The facilitator says, "We will group these items into clusters of items. Would someone read all of the items. As Anne (?) is reading please note down names of arenas. We will be organizing by (name the organizing principle). Are there any questions?"

The categories are listed on the board or on a flip chart sheet. The facilitator writes categories on the board while one person reads his/her list. The facilitator asks if there are any additional categories. If the list of categories does not reflect the organizing principle, the list can be put on the board and another person asked to read his/her list. The facilitator then can ask which items on these lists best reflect the organizing principle.

If there is time each item can be put into one of the categories by identifying the category with a symbol and putting the symbol next to each item. If there is little time the facilitator can ask if there are any items that do not seem to fit into the category.

The categories are then clarified.

This method incorporates the naming process in the organizing process.

Problems in Organizing

There are several problems that can arise when organizing material: one or two clusters that are much larger than the others, clusters that should be two or three separate groups, too few clusters, items that don't fit, disagreement about where the item goes, vague items, resistance to putting items together (fear of losing unique contributions), very small clusters and two clusters that really should be one.

Vague or Large Clusters

The problems of one or two clusters that are much larger than any of the others, clusters that should be in separate groups, and too few clusters can be treated in the same way. Clusters that are much larger than any of the others are likely to be vague and normally should be divided, although this is up to the judgement of the facilitator. When at the end of the organizing there are too few clusters, it is likely that the category has become too abstract.

These problems can be separated by the facilitator saying, "There seems to be more than one kind of group in this cluster. If we were to divide it into two or more groups what would they be?" Put items in separate clusters. If there is only one cluster that needs to be done, move to naming and start with these separated clusters.

Items that don't fit

Items that don't fit, disagreement about where the item goes, and vague items can be handled in much the same way. If this kind of item comes up early in the organizing process, it can be put in a separate category and dealt with when the clusters become more clear. This gives the group and the facilitator time to think about it. If it comes up late in the process then it needs to be handled. If the item is truly unique and it is the same level of abstraction of the other items it can be a separate category. Generally such items have multiple meanings for the group and these meanings need to be clarified. The facilitator can ask, "Can some of you give us an example of what you mean?" If the facilitator senses the different meaning he or she can suggest the differences. In either case the item can be put into two or more categories (by marking it with the appropriate symbols or by making more cards).

Resistance

Resistance to putting items together can have two sources. If it is one individual, then ask the group where it might go. If it is the whole group, then the term you are using to group the items may sound too strong. Instead of asking, "Which cluster does this belong to?", the facilitator might ask, "Which cluster is this item most closely related too?" or "Which cluster would you associate this item with?" If resistance continues you may end up with a large number of categories. Try putting them together after the tentative names have been given by asking, "Which of these are really about the same thing?"

Small Clusters

Clusters with one or two items after tabulation when the rest of the groups have several items are usually too small to represent a real category. Clusters that are very small or that should go together can be dealt with easily by asking the group to decide. The facilitator asks, "Which cluster can this one go with?"

At the same time, it is possible that a small cluster is a real category. The category can be so obvious to everyone that they did not bother to mention it. It can be a real break-through area that no one has thought of before.

Naming

The naming process is building a consensus within the group. By giving a concrete name to a cluster the group "owns" the cluster. The process of coming to an agreement about the name is also defining the meaning of the cluster for the group.

Like the organizing process, the naming process has a naming principle. In a very strict workshop every name should be of the same type and of the same structure. Vision clusters should be "*Toward adjective, adjective noun*" and tactics "*gerund, adjective, noun.*" Names should be the same level of abstraction. "Better Communications" is not only a poor category (it is nearly meaningless) but it is a different level of abstraction than "Weekly Client Bulletins".

Two kinds of names can be used: a rational name and a "poetic" name. Rational names clearly point to the content of the cluster. They are descriptive of the items in the cluster. The name "Weekly Client Bulletins" is an example of a rational name. It points to the activity that the group will do. Poetic names are metaphors or analogies and point to the "spirit" of the cluster. Poetic names are used for projects or campaigns. They can be motivating and give a wider latitude of interpretation when implemented. They are best created after the cluster is given a tentative rational name. "Every Client Every Week" might be a poetic name of the project "Weekly Client Bulletins".

Steps

The naming process is essentially done in three steps.

Step one is giving it a tentative name. This is really a holding category and usually done in the Normal Organization method as part of the preparation for the tabulation. Giving tentative names also allows the group to think more about the category while they are working on something else. The facilitator asks, "What is this cluster about?" This does not need a lot of discussion. When agreement is reached put the name above the cluster or in the case of Cross-Organization put it next to the symbol.

Step two is naming the arena. For most workshops this is a noun. Some use a gerund phrase, if actions are organized. The most concrete of names which is inclusive of all data in the cluster is desired. The facilitator asks, "What is this arena? What is a more specific name? What can we call it without being too abstract or losing any items?" If the answer is easy and the group comes to a quick agreement there is no need to put this on the board. If it is not easy or the group finds the name difficult to come to write alternatives on the board. When the group reaches an agreement go on to the next step.

Step three is clarifying the arena. This is adding modifiers to the arena name. The most time is spent here. The arena name can change as the group tries to create a name. The facilitator asks, "What is this arena really about? How can we clarify the arena name with one or two adjectives (adverbs)? What would make the title more clear?"

This same process continues until all of the clusters are named.

After two or three clusters are named and the group understands the process it is possible to ask teams or individuals to complete the naming process.

Creating the framework of the workshop is to write the introduction, including the on-stage, to write the closing reflections and comments and to decide what comments and suggestions might be of assistance to the group in the process of doing the workshop (these are called short courses).

Introduction

The introduction contains an opening, an outline of the process, the way time will be used, what the product will be, and a way of focusing the group on the content of the workshop. The tone of the whole workshop is established here. The group is formed if it has not met before. The roles of facilitator and participants are established.

Opening

The opening is in the first place a normal greeting ritual. It might be just saying, "Good Morning" if the group is one that works together often. In some cultures it is important to shake each person's hand and introduce yourself. An introductory conversation (see the Basic Conversation Method) is useful for a group that has not met in this way before. It also allows the facilitator to hear the names of the group-members and some of their thinking.

Process Outline

The participants are told what the steps of the workshop are and what they will be doing. This need not be long or specific but enough to make them comfortable with how they will be spending their time.

Time Use and Practical Considerations

The participants are told how long the workshop will be, when breaks and meals are. This would also be the time to explain any administrative considerations.

Products

The facilitator explains what the end product(s) is/are in general terms, e.g. we will produce at the end of this workshop a list of the qualities of an effective trainer.

Focus

Focusing the group on the topic of the workshop is the most important part of this section. The facilitator can explain the focus question, give a short(!) presentation, or lead the group in a reflective conversation about the topic. In any case, the participants need to have a clear understanding of what the topic is and where the boundaries are.

Conclusion

The conclusion also has several steps: affirmation of the work, reflection on the process, discerning implications, deciding next steps and the closing.

Affirmation

A tribute of the work of the group is given. The product is praised. The effort that went into the workshop is affirmed. The affirmation can be subtle or grand as long as it is sincere.

Reflection

The facilitator leads a reflection on the process that has just been completed. Two things happen when this is done. The group appropriates the decisions that they have made and they learn the process. The Basic Conversation Method can be used to develop this reflection.

Implications

The implications of the workshop should be stated in order for the group to begin looking toward the future. This process can be part of the reflection conversation. It can also be done by asking one of the group to say what this means for the group.

Next Steps

This is really a continuation of the Implications process but makes it more practical and immediate. Again this can be part of the reflection conversation or a statement by the facilitator. The team leader or department manager can also be asked to say what the next steps are.

Closing

Like the opening this is a kind of ritualistic goodbye. It can be simply, "See you next week at the next workshop" or "Thank you very much. I am looking forward to seeing you again." It might be shaking everyone's hand or a few closing remarks.

Short Courses

Short courses are simple explanations of processes or ideas to help the group understand what they are doing. They can answer a question like "What is a brainstorm?" They can help the group stay focused on the topic. These comments by the facilitator are crucial for a smoothly running workshop. They need not be done in every workshop but should be thought about by the facilitator if the need comes up.

Examples

Brainstorming: Brainstorming is a way for people to generate new and creative ideas. It is the process of suspending judgement about ideas that come to mind. As you are writing down ideas and something comes to mind that you think is not good, write it down anyway even if it seems stupid at the time.

Why individual work? In the workshop process it is important that everyone has an opportunity to put their ideas into the process. We begin with individual work to provide a structural way for this to happen.

Naming: It is important to give good concrete names to clusters. The more specific the better. Specific names are more motivating and represent the thinking of the group better. Nothing is more boring than a name so general that it could apply to any group any time.

Refining the workshop

Refining the workshop is to create materials: wall charts, worksheets and illustrations. It is deciding what equipment is needed and getting it. Deciding what setting will be used and how to make it more effective. Finally, refinement is practicing the workshop.



6

Worksheets

Workshop Worksheet

Focus Question: <i>In this box, write the subject of the workshop as specifically as you can, in the form of a question.</i>		
Rational Objective: <i>In this box, write the product of the workshop as specifically as possible.</i>		Existential Aim: <i>In this box, describe the experience you intend the group to have.</i>
Step	Procedure	Time
Context	Focusing <i>In this box, write the introduction the group will need. Make sure you have defined whatever terms may be new to them, that the question and procedures are clear and that they understand WHY they are doing these steps.</i>	<i>Say how long each step will take</i>
Move-ments	I Brainstorming <i>In this box, write the question or questions you will use for the brainstorming step of the workshop. Consider what problems your group may have in coming up with answers, and think of things you could say to help them think of further ideas.</i>	
	II Organizing <i>Here write down the questions you will use to begin putting the group's ideas into some form. What relationships between their ideas are important? Different issues are grouped differently - Problems go together because they have a common root cause, but tactics go together because they are actions that are similar or are done together.</i>	
	III Naming <i>Next, of course, write what steps you will use to have the group name the parts of their developing picture. How much time do they need to discuss and debate? How much control do they need from you?</i>	
Conclusion		
Reflecting <i>Finally, consider the way in which to let the group appreciate their work. This could be giving their information an overall title, or talking about the process of the work, planning to present the results of the workshop – whatever seems suitable.</i>		

Workshop Worksheet

Focus Question:		
Rational Objective:		Existential Aim:
Step	Procedure	Time
Context		
Move- ments	I	
	II	
	III	
Conclusion		



Tips for Developing and Using

Section Seven: Tips for Developing and Using

The Keys to a good Workshop are the underlying rationale, the structure, the clarity of the procedures and the style of the leader.

A Workshop Facilitator's Checklist

The Method

- Uses method structure
- Gives lucid contexts
- Gives clear instructions
- Asks open-ended questions
- Honors the time design

Enables participation

- Controls distractions
- Encourages the intuitions of the group
- Encourages the rationality of the group
- Checks for understanding in the group
- Uses people's names
- Maintains eye contact
- Gives verbal reinforcement
- Gives nonverbal reinforcement

Develops consensus

- Encourages creative alternatives
- Discourages argumentative comments
- Restates questions accurately
- Summarizes comments reliably

Effective product

- Encourages realistic, concrete results
- Enables rational or poetic charts or titles

Leadership style

Does clear and understandable boardwork

Uses visual aids

Creates a sustaining rhythm in the session

Deals with distractions without discouraging participation

Phrases questions helpfully

Enables the mood of the group

The facilitator has the tasks of enabling the group to succeed, building it into a team, facilitating the group's resolve and enlarging its operating context.

The facilitator's first task is that of *enabling the group to succeed*.

Enabling success is empowering and motivating for the participants. The facilitator uses as much precision as possible as a tool for success. This results in the group creating a model or plan. Overemphasis on the plan can result in a plan or model but no action.

Team building is the second task of the facilitator. Team building is expanding, increasing and deepening the existing relationships within the group. The facilitator uses his own compassion for the group as a tool toward this end. The result of team building is a consensus. The danger of overconsideration of team building is that the group has a good time but never makes a real decision.

Creating group resolve is the third task of the facilitator. Creating resolve in a group is aligning its collective will in the same direction and encouraging its decision to act. The facilitator uses indirection of ideas and comments so that the group comes to their own decisions. The result is action. The danger of focusing too much on action is that the work will not result from a plan and thus will tend to be ineffective.

Enlarging the operating context of the group is the final task of the facilitator. Enlarging the context of a group is to extend the time frame and increasing the operating world in which it works. The facilitator uses objectivity and distance from the group as tools to enlarge the group's context. The result is motivation. The danger of being too objective and distant by the facilitator is a shallow group plan.

The qualities of an effective facilitator are a set of disciplines: rigorous thinking and pursuit of the goal of the workshop, flexibility in use of the methods, involvement in and commitment to the processes and detachment from the need to control the content.

Effective facilitation is an art requiring *discipline about the method*, in the use of time, and in one's own relationship to the group. Facilitating a workshop requires discipline about the use of time and being able to help the group move quicker or knowing when to shorten a step. Facilitating a workshop requires rigor in pursuing the intent of the workshop. It is demanding as much depth of ideas from the group as they are willing to share. Facilitating is finally the discipline of respecting and honoring the group.

Effective facilitation is the art of *knowing what to change when*. Facilitating a workshop requires flexibility in style and method based on the specific group you are dealing with. Facilitating a workshop requires that the facilitator responds to the specific situation of the workshop, the ideas that come up, the needs of the participants, the room, etc. and not his own needs. It is recognizing that there is never an ideal workshop yet every one can be a good workshop. Facilitating a workshop means being flexible about following the specific procedures of the workshop method.

Effective facilitation is *being fully engaged in the workshop by being fully responsible for its outcome*. An effective facilitator is willing to risk himself in seeing that the group succeeds. The facilitator is willing to do

whatever necessary for the workshop to produce the products intended. Effective facilitation requires preparation: both intellectual and emotional. The facilitator is engaged with the group.

At the same time, effective facilitation requires *detachment*. An effective facilitator is detached from their own insights and ideas because it is the group's decision that has the higher priority in a workshop. A facilitator is detached from their own accomplishments; more important are the successes of the group. It is being detached from one's own emotional involvement in the process and people. The facilitator is detached from the group enough to enable it.

The Logistics of a Workshop

The following is a list of things to be prepared by the facilitator.

The Room

The Table Setting

The Walls

Decor

The Brainstorm Materials

Individual Notebooks

Cards

Flip chart Sheets

The Black/White Board

The Organizing Materials

Symbols

Tape

Pens or Chalk



The Naming Materials

Cards

Flip chart Sheets

Forms

Reproduction Equipment

Computer

Printer

Photocopier

8

References

Section Eight: References

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