**Mastering the Challenges to Collaboration - A Three Hour Workshop**

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**Background:**
Once it becomes clear that a collaborative effort to advance common interests is determined to have the potential to be worthwhile, critically important steps must be taken for success to occur.  Having the first meetings be effective and stimulating will create the momentum for future meetings.  Still, there are serious challenges to and lively, keeping participant stakeholders interested and involved over time.  If the collaborative will be needed for many years, even decades, the group will institutionalize processes that create sustainability.  For example, developing and distributing leadership skills will help sustain effective involvement and long term commitment.

**Workshop Goals:**

Participants learn how to put collaboration theory into practice.
Participants have increased confidence and motivation to use the skills they learn at this
    workshop in their personal and professional life.

**Workshop Objectives:**
Learn different decision making processes and why consensus with a fall back super-
    majority works best in many situations.  Identify obstacles and pathways to gaining
    agreement on the decision making process.

Identify other specific challenges ('sand traps") that face sustaining partnerships and then
    develop strategies to address them.  Learn strategies to make continuous improvement
    and adjustments in the partnership to ensure that changing needs, issues, visions are
    respectfully addressed.

Learn about "interest versus position" and the definitions of mission, purpose, vision,
    goals, strategies, objectives, and tasks.   Understand some methods used by groups/
    collaborations to gain agreement their common interests, goals, mission, strategies and
    more.

Provide insights into conflict resolution, delegation of responsibilities, time management,
    multiple ways to give and receive feedback, managing upward (?), negotiating, the use
    of advisory boards and committees as a strategies for recruitment and/or further
    involvement or extension of resources and more.

**Immediately before the workshop/meeting**
    The workhop/meeting room is set up in semi circles facing a wall that has sets of
    flip chart paper taped one on top of the other, ready to be written on and easily
    moved.  In one set of paper are the various pre-written materials that the trainer will
    use.

**0:00   Welcome.**
    The trainer(s) starts on time and welcomes the participants.  They then have five
    minutes to do the following:

Explain that the workshop will be run like a meeting.  Tell them where they can find the agenda.
-   Announce that a sign-in list will be circulated.  Read the top before signing.
Tell them that they don't have to take notes in the workshop, as almost all of the material is available in the manual.  They will not need to read the manual during the workshop; in fact, it would be better if they didn't.
If anyone would like to type up the meeting notes and circulate them afterwards they are welcome and can take the flip chart paper (if the trainers won't be using it.

**0:02    Introductions**
The trainer ends the "welcome" with an explanation of the groundrules for introductions.  *"This workshop's introductions should take no more than 20 to 30 seconds.  Please limit what you say in your introduction to your:*
- Name
- Progam and state in which you work
- In 20 words or less, what you think the biggest problem stopping success in collaborative efforts.

The trainer then models the introduction and gestures to a person to the right or left to follow suit.

The trainer writes a few words summarizing the problems identified by the participants.

Late comers are greeted at the door by a volunteer who tells them that the meeting is in progress and the agenda is on the board.

A sign up sheet is circulated once everyone is seated.  The sign up sheet includes name, organizational affiliation and email address.  (This is modeled after a sign-up sheet that should be circulated most meetings.)

**0:10    Establish meeting groundrules.**
The trainer uncovers the groundrule sheet and explains that after they are reviewed and clarified, the participants will be asked to state Yes or No to running the meeting with these groundrules.

>    **Raise Hands -** Stay in order except for:
>        Point of clarification
>        Point of process
>    **Don't Interrupt Speaker** (only facilitator may)
>    **Stay on Subject**
>    **Be Concise, Don't Repeat.**
>    **Be Respectful, Be Polite.**

The trainer explains each groundrule and its value using the information in the facilitation manual.

After groundrules are explained and there are no more questions, the trainer says something like *"Will all who support using these groundrules say Yes?  Is anyone opposed? The groundrules are adopted.*"  The groundrules almost always are accepted.  If not, the facilitator/trainer asks why not to the individual(s) in opposition and attempts to resolve the issues.  Eventually the group formally adopts the groundrules.

The groundrules paper is then transferred to a side wall where it remains visible during the meeting.

**0:15** **Agenda Review**
The trainer either uncovers the agenda on flip chart paper or tells them to find the agenda that has been handed out.  Have additional agendas to pass around if anyone doesn't have one.

The trainer reviews the goals and objectives of the workshop and asks if there are any questions about these.  The reviewer doesn't go into detail about the time allotments for the agenda items and only addresses these if questions are raised about them. It is assumed that everyone is there for the full workshop.

The trainer explains the "bin" page.  This is where items that are not on the agenda or not being covered at the time a person thinks of them are written down on a flip chart in the front of the room.  The paper is labeled "BIN".  Participants are encourage to help remember items in the "Bin" during the appropriate agenda time slot or at the end of the meeting if time allows.  By writing down the issues that people have so that everyone can see them, even when the issues and ideas are off subject, the contributor of the issue/idea is often satisfied and doesn't continually try to raise it over and over again.

**0:20** **Explain the basic tasks and responsibilities of the facilitator**
If the workshop will involve participants practicing the roles of facilitator and recorder and the participants have not already taken the workshop **Effective Ways To Run Meetings,** the trainer will take five minutes and review the tasks of for each role.  (See "Tricks of a Good Facilitator" in Kevin Wolf's manual The Makings of a Good Meeting.)

**0:25** **Prioritizing the Biggest Problems Facing Successful Collaborations**
The trainer explains that this first exercise will build off of the list of problems identified in the introductions.  The objective is to gain agreement on the top three problems this group thinks exists and then focus the next section on addressing how to solve those specific problems. This exercise will also provide hands on experience with the decision-making processes in Objective 1.  The exercise models how a group can go from a brainstorm to a decision. If consensus cannot be reached in ten minutes, the trainer uses the voting process and determines if there is a supermajority (75%).  Whether or not that fails or succeeds, the trainer finishes off the exercise with some additional thoughts on how consensus could have been reached. The trainer has already grouped the problems into categories using the titles from the ten problems/"sand traps" that Emilio has in his handout.   The trainer or volunteer facilitator provides about a half a sheet between each category and writes has extra space in each category to write additional suggestions and ideas. The facilitator begins with the first category, reads the comments and asks if there is clarification on the category.  Then the trainer states some of the clarification he or she thinks is needed and writes them in.  If the pages are too messy a volunteer assistant can be writing the titles of the categories on a separate sheet of paper or two with lines drawn between each category.

Once all categories have been clarified and new ones added, the group has 10-15 minutes to discuss which are more important than others.  The trainer asks if the participants will accept a new groundrule that a person does not speak a second time in this "debate" period until everyone else who wants to speak has done so. When this is agreed to, the facilitator calls on people who raise their hands.  Before a second person speaks outside of the "point of clarification or process" groundrule,

the facilitator should give a 5 plus seconds of silence waiting for a person who hasn't yet spoken to finally raise their hand. Good eye contact helps the facilitator know who needs coaxing to share their good ideas.

**0:50    Break and Weighing Exercise**
Before the break occurs, the trainer reminds everyone of the groundrules. (See Facilitation Manual Appendix E.)

**1:00    Finalize Top 3 categories.**
The trainer then leads a process to reach consensus in ten minutes. (See the ten minute exercise in Facilitation Manual Appendix D.)  If no agreement is reached, the trainer calls for a vote on the proposal most likely to gain a supermajority of support.  First the facilitator selects the proposal that has the best chance of passing. Don't begin a new one.  Then call for a vote.

In this process, the trainer explains and models the supermajority voting process. If 75% of the participants support the proposal, it automatically passes.  (See Supermajority Voting procedure in the hand out on the California Urban Forests Convention process.)

The trainer then explains other ways that a decision could be made when consensus hasn't been reached. These include:
Change the parameters of the goal/objective of the exercise.  Instead of being boxed in with the objective of deciding on the top three, why can't the group choose 4,5, or 6 priorities?
Use an Alaskan Voting process (see Appendix D.)
Spend more time and find out why some so strongly want categories to be included in the top three priorities.  From this identification of key interests, consensus can often be found.
The decision could be made by selecting a minimum of three people per breakout group and then, with each participant only having one vote, decide which categories have three or more participants in it and then have all that meet that cutoff be their own small groups.

**1:15    Breakouts**
The trainer directs everyone to pick up their chair and move to a different part of the room based on categories.  Before everyone acts, the trainer provides instructions on what will occur in the breakout. This is also in writing for them to refer to.  The directions include:

Someone volunteers to facilitate. Another is the recorder, whether or not flip chart paper is available. If possible, there is paper ready for them on a wall in the 3-5 parts of the room (one reason to set a limit on the number of breakout groups).

The objective of the 15 minute drill is to come up with the top 3-5 actions that a group can take to resolve the problem.
- Brainstorm (5 min)
- Discuss (10 min)
- Vote (5 min)

**1:35    Return to plenary group.  Replace chairs in semi-circle.**

**1:40    Report from Breakout Groups**
The groups come back together and each one has three minutes to report the results. There is time for one or two clarifications before the next group is up.  4 groups

should be done in 15 minutes.  The trainer has the last five minutes to wrap it up and provide his or her insights.

Note: The trainer could pick a new volunteer facilitator and recorder to help in this exercise.   Someone needs to volunteer to be the timekeeper and give the 1 minute and ten second warnings.   The facilitator helps keep the time requirement and then assists in the next two minutes of questions and answers.  The recorder writes down the key points of each, though some presenter might have this already written out on flip chart paper.

**2 pm   Reviewing the Trainer's Priority Problems and Issues.**
No matter issues the 3-5 breakout groups discuss and present, it is likely that the trainer will have their own experience in what is a priority for the participants to think about and learn in order to be effective at sustainable partnerships and collaborations.  For the next 50 minutes, the trainer will work his or her way through his or her own priorities using the Socratic method of asking the participants questions.

For example, let's assume that the "Developing effective committees" was not the participants' priority but the trainer believes it is an important skill to learn.  Here is a sample ten-minute method for dealing with these issues.

Trainer:  OK. For the next 50 minutes I am going to review with you some of the key problems and solutions I believe are important to creating sustainable collaboratives, partnerships, and most "voluntary" organizations.  The first issue is Developing Effective Committees*.  (Write "Effective Committees" on two flip chart papers.)*   There isn't any background material on this in the material you are getting so be sure to take notes. *(Or, this is well covered in the material you have so there is no need to take notes.)*  First, raise your hand if you have been involved with organizations that use committees.   Tell me what is good about them and what goes wrong.

As participants raise their hands and add their thoughts, the trainer writes them on one sheet marked + for positive or the other marked with a triangle for "change".  When a person provides an idea or example, the trainer should follow up with clarifying questions where this will help the participant elucidate one of the key points the trainer wants to make.  When this occurs, the trainer will state something like:

"That is right.  Without a clear scope of work and set of objectives, committee won't be doing the right thing and the overall organization or partnership will not be able to as easily evaluate whether the committee is effective or not, and if not, why not."

At the beginning of the exercise, the trainer should have asked someone to watch the clock for them and tell them when they are close to the ten-minute mark and when they reach it. At this time the trainer needs to make a decision to cut the discussion off and move to the next item or put more time into this one.   The trainer should remention any resources in the materials that could provide additional information.

The trainer then moves to the next priority on his or her personal list.  If the trainer isn't so sure what to make as the priority to talk about in more detail, he or she should evaluate the list that the participants came up with and talk about the ones that were not discussed in much detail or the ones that the trainer wants to reinforce but with additional information and insights.

We recommend that the trainer start each section with questions such as those below so that the information presented can fit into the world view and understanding of the meeting participants.

**2:40   The Bin**

With five or ten minutes left before the Evaluation, the trainer can move to the items that have been placed in the Bin over the course of the workshop. The trainer can choose from the list the ones that he or she thinks is most important or just start at the top. Given how little time remains, the trainer should share their thoughts on each one and than ask for questions or comments. When the trainer finishes on a bin item, he or she can ask the participants "Does anyone want to add anything on this or should we move to the next item?" By adding the latter phrase, participants are much more willing to not get into minutia and move to the next item.

**2:50   Workshop Evaluation**

A final facilitator and recorder are selected or the trainer model doing this by him or herself. The recorder has two sheets on the wall. One is marked with a triangle indicated suggestions for Changes and Improvements to the meeting. The other sheet is marked with a Plus sign indicating things that went well in the workshop/ meeting.

Evaluation groundrules:
> No negative comments are allowed without a suggestion for how to improve it the next time.
> Suggestions for improvements come before positives so that the meeting ends on a positive note.
> If time allows, each person sequentially can say a few words about what liked best, or how they might use they learned. A time limit will likely have to be set. 30 seconds a person and ten minutes covers twenty participants.

**2:55   Adjourn**

When the evaluation is over the trainer asks for a motion to adjourn and a second. "All in favor say Aye. Any Nays? The workshop is adjourned." If the evaluation is not over or hands are still raised but the workshop must end, the facilitator can interrupt the order of hands raised and state "Point of Process. The workshop must end. May I have a motion to adjourn? All in favor say Aye. The workshop is over."

**After the meeting/workshop is over.**

Provide copies of the facilitation manual and other workshop materials including the web address where the information can be downloaded.

Make copies of the sign in list for all who ask for it. (The top of the sign in list should state that the information will be shared with meeting participants. This provides everyone an opportunity to include their email address or not.

Take down the flip chart paper and organize them as is needed. If these are needed by the person who will type up the meeting notes, the note taker should spend as much time then and there to review them and add more comments on each page to help stir the memory for later or for directions to a secretary/assistant who types up the notes. Sequentially marking the page numbers is the usual minimum action to take. The next step up is to outline the pages in a "II, A, 1, b" or similar format. The third level of

detail would be to do these two plus add written notes to provide clarity to a section.

 Put chairs back into order for the next workshop.


Background Material for the Trainer if he or she wants to use participants as volunteer facilitators and recorders in the brainstorm and prioritizing exercises. .


1.  The trainer facilitates and records the first few ideas from participants.  A volunteer is then selected to take over the recording job. Trainer explains the job of the recorder.

>*Use two pens and have each idea written in altering colors.*
>>*<u>Don't use </u>yellow, orange, lime green or white board pens.*
>*Write in 1.5 -2 inch high letters with regular printing.*
>*Number the pages in the top corner.*
>*Have the paper pre-taped for easy movement.*
>*Have a volunteer help post finished paper to the front or side wall.*
>*Summarize.  Be concise in what you write.*
>*The facilitator can help the recorder think of the summary.*

2,  The trainer returns to the brainstorm.  Ideas are written down until no more are suggested.  The trainer then waits 10-15 seconds with silence after which he or she fills in the other benefits that may have been missed by the value of introductions. These might include:

>Helps meetings start on time.
>Can build knowledge of each other and foster trust *(e.g. number of siblings where raised, where ancestors came from).*
>Other introductions can start meeting with some laughter and fun  *(e.g. what was best thing that happened to you this last week, what is your favorite sport to participate in or watch, who do people say you look like).*
>Some introductions can advance the meeting agenda  *(e.g. In five - ten words, why are you at this meeting or what are you most concerned about or what are your hopes for the meeting.)*
>Allows the facilitator to make a seating chart to help remember names. *(Tell participants about the seating chart "cheat sheet" and request they don't move around too much.)*
>Provides and opportunity for everyone to say something at the meeting. *(Once one speaks a first time, it is easier to speak a second time.)*
>Helps everyone recall the names of people they want to remember. *(Including the facilitator.)*