

FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP: RUNNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.	page 1
PROBLEMS WITH MEETINGS	page 2
CREATING AN EFFECTIVE AGENDA	page 3
CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	page 7
PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL MEETING PROCESSES	page 9
FACILITATIVE TECHNIQUES	page 10
ENSURING QUALITY DECISION-MAKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING	page 14
GUARANTEERING SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW-THROUGH AND EFFECTIVE FUTURE MEETINGS	page 19
ASSESSING YOUR MEETINGS.	page 20

Much of the material in this workshop has been adapted from the pioneering work of Interaction Associates, Inc. of San Francisco. Their various meeting seminars, including a two day workshop, MASTERING MEETINGS FOR RESULTS, are nationally acclaimed seminars. The primer on effective meetings is the book, HOW TO MAKE MEETINGS WORK by Michael Doyle and David Strauss, the founders of Interaction Associates.

PROBLEMS WITH MEETINGS

List of problems that you have with meetings:

Possible strategies (to be completed at end of workshop)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE AGENDA



There is sufficient pre-meeting planning:

- The purpose for meeting is clearly defined.
- Meeting as a group is the appropriate means of accomplishing the defined purpose.
- The meeting planners should consider the context in which the meeting will be held.
- Major participants are identified and these stakeholders' expectations and needs have been identified.
- Based on participants' needs, outcomes for the meeting are clarified.
- The roles of facilitator, chair, recorder, and participants have all been assigned:
 - * Will the chair both participate in and facilitate the meeting?
 - * Is there a need for an outside facilitator?
 - * Will the recorder document all or some of the meeting on wall charts?
- There is agreement on how decisions will be made. If the decision-making method is consensus, a fallback decision-making process is defined ahead of time.
- Thought is given to a room setup that facilitates communication.
- There is agreement on what kind of record of the meeting is desired and who will be responsible for sending those minutes out to participants.
- Potential problems and possible strategies for preventing those problems from happening are identified.
- In order to ensure that participants and leader/facilitator are well prepared, a list of materials that needs to be brought to the meeting and additional issues that need to be addressed before the actual meeting are prepared.



There are agreed upon starting and ending times.



A tentative agenda with a list of topics, time allocated, and who is responsible for each item is distributed ahead of time.



The agenda, along with meeting outcomes, is agreed upon at the beginning of the meeting.



The agenda allows time to discuss topics adequately and complete all discussions within the time allotted.

Pre-meeting Planning Worksheet

Title of Meeting _____ Today's Date: _____
Date of Meeting _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

PRE-MEETING ASSESSMENT (CONTEXT OF THE MEETING):

Describe how this meeting relates to the last and next meeting/organizational events that are/will affect this meeting?

MAJOR PARTICIPANTS: WHAT DOES EACH NEED TO GET OUT OF THE MEETING TO FEEL IT WILL BE WORTHWHILE:

participant

"win"

GIVEN PARTICIPANTS' NEEDS, WHAT ARE POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS/CONCERNS ABOUT THE MEETING? LIST POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO PREVENT THESE PROBLEMS FROM HAPPENING:

concern

possible solutions

MEETING ROLES:

Chair (Meeting Leader -- participate in meeting & facilitate meeting):

Recorder:

Facilitator:

Other:

EXPECTATIONS FOR MEETING LEADER? OUTSIDE FACILITATOR?

WHAT KIND OF MINUTES/RECORD OF THE MEETING IS DESIRED? WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING SURE MINUTES ARE DISTRIBUTED? BY WHEN?

DECISION-MAKING METHOD? _____ **Fallback (if consensus):** _____

Who makes what decisions? Any constraints/criteria for decisions:

ROOM ARRANGEMENT/SET UP:

PROPOSED AGENDA

Topic	Process to be Used	Outcome	Who Respon.	Time Frame
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POSSIBLE GROUNDRULES?

MATERIALS THAT PARTICIPANTS MUST BRING TO THE MEETING:

ADDITIONAL MEETING PREPARATION; OTHER:

NOTICE OF MEETING

Title of Meeting _____ Date of Meeting _____ Meeting Time _____ Place _____

PROPOSED AGENDA			
Agenda Item	Outcome	Time Allocated	Process to be Used Who Responsible

List of Attendees:

Chair/Meeting Leader:
Participants:

Recorder:

Outside Facilitator (if applicable):

Observers:

Please bring the following materials with you:

Other comments:

CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MEETING

Roles are clearly understood and assigned to appropriate individuals.

- Facilitating the meeting

What is facilitation? Facilitation includes:

- * keeping group focused and on time
- * getting agreements
- * reminding group of meeting agreements
- * listening
- * encouraging participation
- * making sure that everyone has a chance to contribute ideas
- * paying attention to meeting process(es)
- * creating a safe and positive environment

- Participating
- Recording information
- Making decisions

The meeting leader (chair) contributes ideas but does not dominate.

Everyone in the meeting participates.

Participants, chair, and facilitator all share responsibility for success of meeting: everyone is a "facilitative" group member.

The Role of the Chair (also known as Facilitative Leader):

- o Participates but does not dominate. Primary role is that of facilitating the meeting.
- o Engages in active listening
- o Suggests processes on how to approach a discussion
- o Makes sure that everyone has a chance to participate
- o Gets agreements on agenda, meeting roles, outcomes, and processes to be used during the meeting
- o Directs the flow of conversation
- o Keeps the group focused on the issue being discussed; reminds people to focus on issues, not on personalities.
- o Coordinates pre-meeting and after-meeting logistics
- o Makes sure the meeting starts and ends on time
- o Helps to create a safe and positive environment
- o Asks someone to be the time-keeper
- o Make sure that the wall charts/notes from the meeting are typed up and distributed to all participants and absentees.

The Role of the Neutral Facilitator:

- o Does all of the above **except does not participate.**

The Role of the Recorder:

- o Develops the "group memory" (record of the meeting written on large pieces of paper on the wall)
- o Uses key words of speaker/does not interpret.
- o Writes legibly using varying colors
- o Writes large enough for audience to read ideas
- o Remembers to number all sheets
- o Records information quickly: may misspell words and/or abbreviate when necessary; doesn't record every word but key ideas
- o Asks group to correct group memory if an idea has been recorded incorrectly
- o Uses a "bin list" for ideas that are off the agenda topic but that need to be addressed
- o Makes sure there is adequate paper, pens and masking tape. Uses water-based (not permanent) ink pens to record words on butcher paper.
- o Arranges meeting room/chairs to facilitate communication.
- o Practices writing quickly and neatly

- Attention is paid to both the process (how) and the content (what) of the meeting.
- There are suggested processes (approaches) for addressing each agenda item. The group agrees upon the process(es) for approaching a problem and discussing a topic. Process battles are avoided.
- Basic groundrules to avoid problems during the meeting are presented and agreed to. These meeting agreements might include:
 - listen as an ally
 - no side conversations
 - succinct statements/keep to the point
 - focus on issues, not personalities
 - no interruptions
 - OK to disagree--constructively
 - participate fully
 - work to create decisions you can support
- Starting and ending times are adhered to.
- A variety of facilitative techniques are used to ensure a successful meeting.

FACILITATIVE TECHNIQUES

10

Skills and behaviors that can be used at the beginning and during a meeting to prevent problems from happening

- o **Introductions and expectations** given at the beginning of the meeting.
- o **Do adequate preparation** before the meeting, including:
 - Clarify outcomes/what will success look like at the end of the meeting
 - Make sure the right people will be at the meeting (all stakeholders or their representatives)
 - Prepare an agenda with topics, process, time, and who responsible for the topic
 - Distribute the agenda ahead of time.
- o Post agenda on the wall at the beginning of the meeting.
- o At the beginning of the meeting **check for agreement and understanding of the meeting's time frame, agenda, and outcomes.**
- o **Clarify and get agreement on your role.** Are you going to be a neutral facilitator, or are you going to be a facilitative leader (both participating and facilitating the meeting).
- o Clarify **who will be doing the recording**/keeping the group memory -- will it be you or someone else.
- o Consider having a **back-up recorder** if the ideas start to come fast during brainstorming or if as a facilitative leader you want to participate more actively in the discussion and need someone else to pay attention to meeting process(es).
- o Clarify in advance who is going to write up a brief and clearly written summary of the meeting, or type up all the **meeting minutes.**

FACILITATIVE TECHNIQUES

11

Skills and behaviors that can be used at the beginning and during a meeting to prevent problems from happening (con't)

- o **Get agreement/suggest some "commitments to help make for a successful meeting" (groundrules).** You might want to start the meeting off by getting the group to list some agreements to make for a successful meeting, and record them on a piece of butcher paper (as a reminder for the group during the meeting). Let the group come up with their own groundrules but you may suggest one or two to get the ball rolling.

Some possible commitments/groundrules:

- listen as an ally
 - short succinct statements/keep to the point
 - work to create decisions everyone can support
 - no side conversations
 - focus on issues/not personalities (focus on the proposal, not the proposer)
 - no interruptions
 - OK to disagree - constructively
 - participate fully
 - work to create decisions you can support
- o Make suggestions (and get agreement) on **how to proceed/the process to be used for each topic** . (For example: "Lets brainstorm a list of the major changes you see occurring in your community....")
 - o Make sure all participants understand the rules of brainstorming. **The objective of brainstorming** is to come up with as many ideas as possible within the time allowed:
 - all ideas are OK;
 - during brainstorm please defer evaluation;
 - build on others' ideas;
 - creativity is encouraged.

After the list of ideas is generated, ask if any ideas need clarification: "Does anyone have any questions regarding any of the ideas that have been listed?").

- o Ask **open ended questions** when appropriate ("Do you know what an open ended question is?" versus "What is an open ended question?").

FACILITATIVE TECHNIQUES

12

Skills and behaviors that can be used at the beginning and during a meeting to prevent problems from happening (con't)

- o **Be positive** ("Great!" "Good!" "Thank-you!" "I know that this is an important and difficult issue; I'm sure we can make sure everyone has a chance to give their opinion and come up with a list we are all willing to live with and support.")
- o **Take breaks regularly** -- average attention/sitting span is about 50 minutes long.
- o Define **consensus**: a decision everyone is willing to live with and support; not to be confused with a unanimous decision.
- o **Use open body-language** (don't facilitate with your arms crossed or both hands in your pocket).
- o **Encourage participation.** ("Anyone not have a chance to speak?" "Before I call on those who have already spoken, let's hear from those who haven't given an idea yet.")
- o Consider the use of **round-robin** to encourage everyone to speak: go around in a circle, and have everyone make one comment; people have the option of passing; at the end of the round-robin, go back to those who have passed and ask if they have anything to add.
- o Engage in **active listening** (repeating what you have heard, trying to use participants own words as much as possible).
- o Don't be afraid to make and **admit to mistakes** ("I'm sorry that I didn't record what you said."). And, most importantly, -- don't be defensive!
- o **If you are both facilitating and participating**, it is important that you do not dominate the meeting, and are able to maintain your neutrality. If you need to participate actively in a particular discussion **clearly change your role** to that of participant and not facilitator. (You may want to ask someone else to take your place as the facilitator for the remainder of the discussion, sit down, and make your statements.)
- o Remember, **if you are the "facilitative leader" your primary role is to facilitate the meeting, not participate. And if you are a neutral facilitator you have an agreement with the group not to participate.**

FACILITATIVE TECHNIQUES

13

Skills and behaviors that can be used during a meeting to intervene if a problem occurs/get the group back on track

- o Use a technique called "**Boomerang**" -- turn the question back to the participant or the group. (Participant: "This isn't working for me." Facilitator: "What's not working for you. Do you have a suggestion as to what to do instead?")
- o Continually try to **maintain/regain focus**. Use posted agenda/written questions and group memory to get the group back on track.
- o **Say what's going on** ("It looks like everyone really needs a break; why don't we just finish up this list and then take a five minute stretch break.").
- o **Avoid process battles** ("why don't we just try to finish listing the major changes you see in your community before discussing strategies you may use to take advantage of opportunities and overcome potential threats").
- o **Remind people of meeting groundrules** and other agreements (such as outcomes of discussion, limited time to accomplish given task, listen as an ally, etc.).
- o Use **humor**.
- o Use **body language** (e.g., focus people back on the topic by pointing to the question being discussed).
- o Remind people to **focus on issues, not personalities** (also known as: focus on the proposal, not the proposer).
- o **Acknowledge/legitimize people's concerns**; deal with these concerns immediately or defer to a different time ("**bin**" an item if it is off track and come back to it at an appropriate time). Make sure you do address the concern at the appropriate time, or agree on how and when it is best discussed.
- o Use a simple prioritizing tool called **N/3**: take number of ideas, divide by 3 and give that number of votes per participant. This is a process to get a sense of which ideas the group is most in agreement about; it is not a final decision-making tool.
- o Exercise **flexibility**.

Reference: **MASTERING MEETING FOR RESULTS**, Interaction Associates

- Key "stakeholders" are well represented and involved in the decision-making process. This would include:
 - Final decision-makers
 - People who will be affected by the decision
 - People with the power to block or assist the decision being implemented.

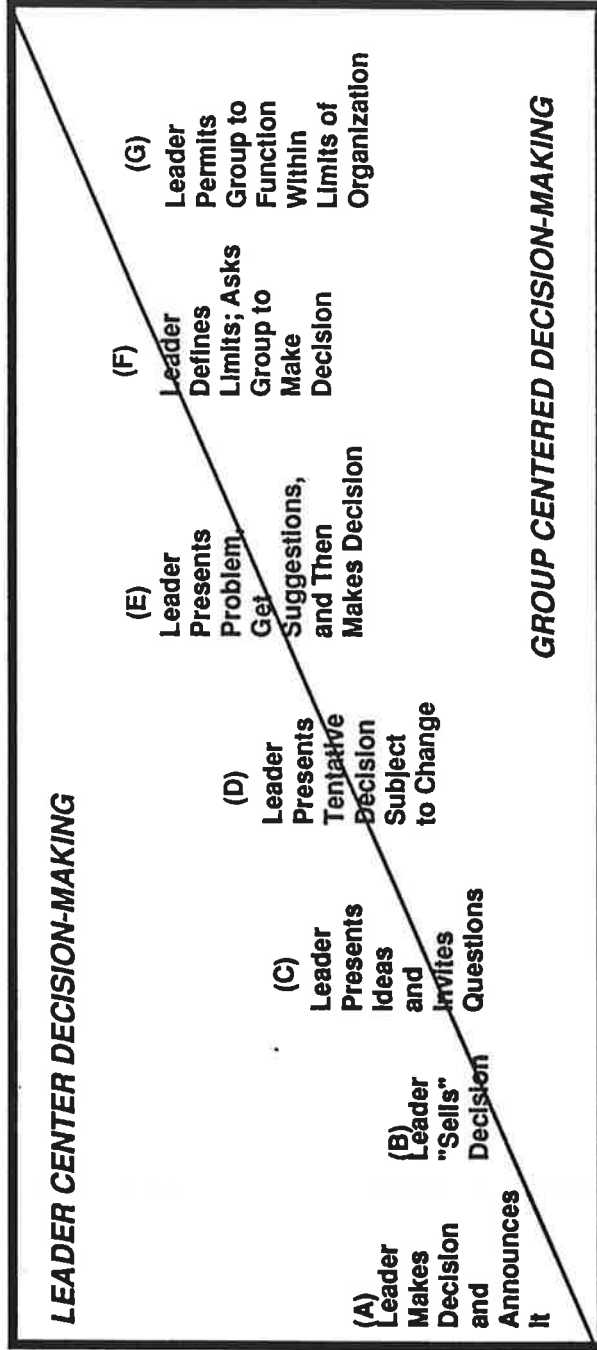
- There is a clear understanding of who and how decisions are made. Those involved in the decision-making process know in advance whether they have the power actually to make the decision or whether they are being asked for their input.

- If consensus is used as a decision-making method, a fallback method is clearly understood and agreed upon in advance.

- When doing problem solving, adequate time is spent defining, agreeing on, and analyzing the problem before looking at solutions.

- After a decision is made, a plan for implementation, monitoring, and evaluating the solution(s) is prepared.

CONTINUUM OF LEADERSHIP DECISION-MAKING



FACTORS TO CONSIDER:

- 1) amount of time available to make the decision
- 2) needed buy-in from the group
- 3) leader's management style
- 4) complexity of the issue
- 5) the situation itself (complexity of issue, conflicting factors, etc.)
- 6) a leader can delegate responsibility but cannot delegate ultimate accountability
- 7) group's ability to work together and do effective problem solving
- 8) needed expertise/experience/knowledge of people in position to make the decision
- 9) type of decision (strategic/operational/technical/coordinating)

OPTIONS IF GROUP MAKES THE DECISION:

- 1) Unanimity*
 - 2) Consensus*
 - 3) Majority Vote
 - 4) Delegate to a smaller group (larger group gives input; smaller group actually makes decision)
 - 5) Other (for example: need 80% in agreement)
- * requires fall-back mechanism if unable to reach unanimous or consensus decision

- | | |
|----------|---|
| A | -leader identifies problem
-chooses a solution/
makes a decision
-reports this decision to group
-no opportunity for participation
-coersion may or may not be used |
| B | -leader takes responsibility for the decision
-persuades group to accept it |
| C | -leader provides fuller explanation of thinking
-leader invites questions so gets a better idea of why
-together they explore implications |
| D | -group can exert some influence
-leader defines the problem
-leader offers tentative decision
-asks group for reaction
-leader reserves right for final decision |
| E | -leader defines the problem
-leader does not bring a solution to the group
-group gets first chance at solution
-leader selects solution |
| F | -leader passes responsibility onto the group
-leader defines the boundaries of the decision |
| G | -total group freedom
-group diagnosis of problem
-group decision on solution
-leader participates with no more authority than any other member of the group
-leader commits to assisting in implementing the decision |

Source: Harvard Business Review, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern" by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, May-June 1973
adapted by Jude Kaye, Support Center of San Francisco

FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING A DECISION-MAKING MODE

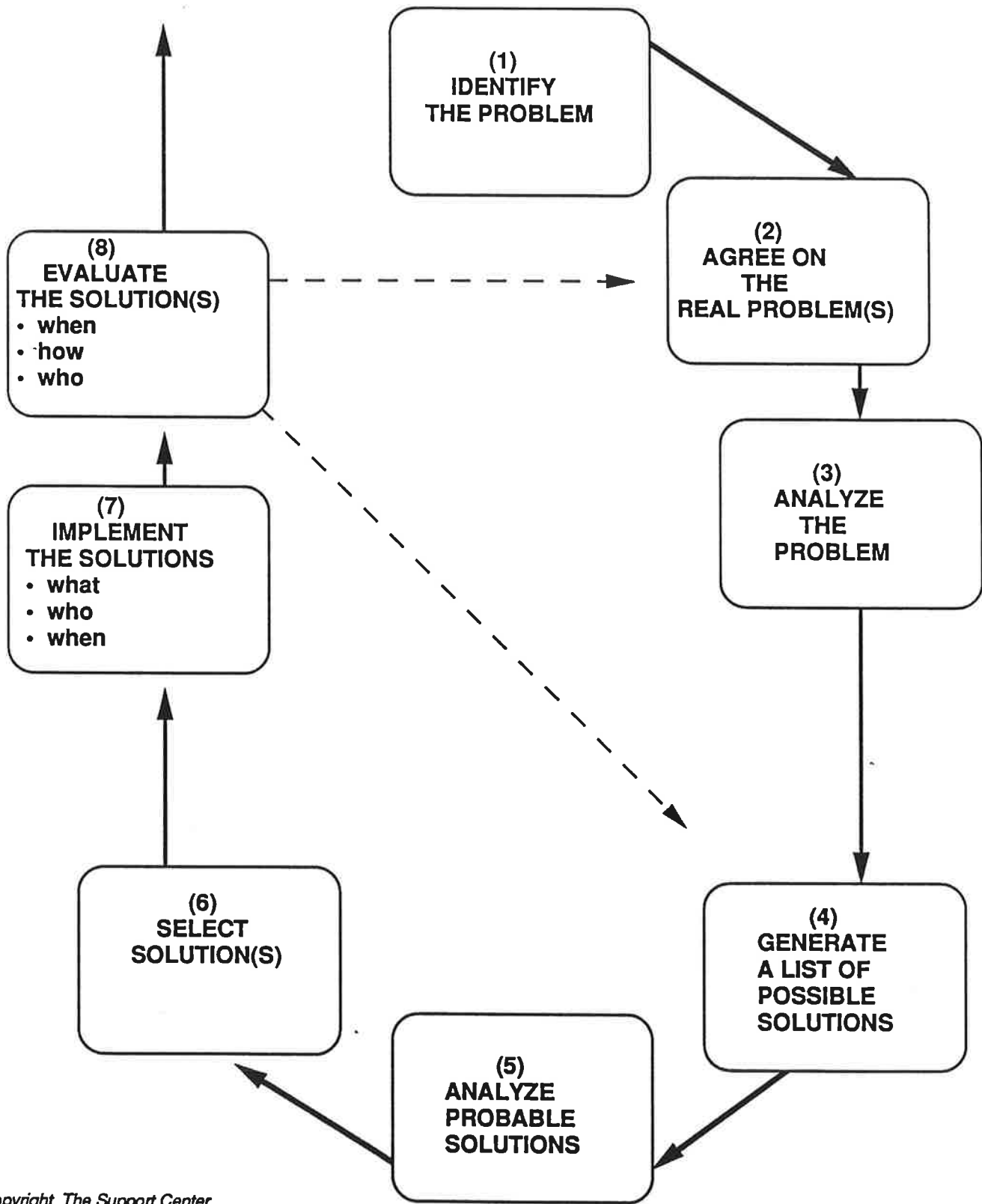
What decision needs to be made : _____
Constraints: _____

I feel perfectly willing to share the power and responsibility for making the decision.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
I feel comfortable being accountable for the decision that the group comes up with.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
My own leadership inclination is towards allowing the group to make the decision.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
I feel secure in uncertain situations.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group is willing to assume responsibility for the decision.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group thinks the problem is very important.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group is interested in the problem and its resolution.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group understands the goals of the organization.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group is made up of stakeholders whose buy-in is essential to the success of the solution.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The group has the knowledge and experience to deal with the problem.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Within the group there is a climate of mutual confidence, respect and an ability to work together in solving problems.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
The problem is important enough to devote group time to discussing it.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
There is adequate time to allow the group to discuss the problem thoroughly, analyze solutions, and make a decision that I can support.	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Group input will help solve this complex problem.	YES	NO	NOT SURE

Reference: *Harvard Business Review*, "How to Choose a Leadership Pattern",

by Robert Tannenbaum and Warren H. Schmidt, May-June 1973.

A MODEL FOR PROBLEM SOLVING



SAMPLE PROBLEM SOLVING MEETING AGENDAS

FIRST MEETING

Outcome of Meeting: Agreement on a definition of the problem and the major reasons why it exists. Time Frame: 2 hours		
WHAT	HOW	TIME
* Agreement on agenda, roles and outcome(s)	* Present * Q & A * Check for Agreement	10 minutes
* Perception of the problem	* Round Robin	20 minutes
* Define problem: -Agree to work on the problem -Agreement on the problem(s)	* Clarify/what's the real problem(s)? * Restate problem: "How to...." * Prioritize/rank order (N/3) * Select one problem to start to discuss	30 minutes
* Analyze causes: -determine major causes	* Brainstorm causes * Clarify * Combine/organize into major topic areas	40 minutes
* Next steps	* List what, who involved/ by when	15 minutes
* Evaluation of meeting	* + Δ	5 minutes

SECOND MEETING

Outcome of Meeting: Agreement on 1 - 4 recommendations/solutions to the identified problem. Time Frame: 2 hours		
WHAT	HOW	TIME
* Agreement on agenda, roles, and outcome(s) * Review last meeting	* Present * Q & A * Check for agreement * Summarize agreements; Q & A	10 minutes
* List of possible solutions/recommendations	* Brainstorm * Clarify * Combine	30 minutes
* Analyze solutions	* List criteria & compare possible solutions with list of criteria * + - probable solutions	30 minutes
* Decision on solution(s)	* Build up/eliminate solutions * Prioritize (N/3) * Select solution(s) everyone can live with and support	30 minutes
* Implementation and evaluation process * Next steps	* List tasks for implementation * Agree on timeline * Brainstorm how/when to evaluate solutions * What, who involved/ by when	15 minutes
* Evaluation of meeting	* + Δ	5 minutes

* Thanks to Joan McIntire, formerly of Interaction Associates, for these sample agendas.

GUARANTEEING SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW-THROUGH AND EFFECTIVE FUTURE MEETINGS

The meeting ends by reviewing next steps, by when, and those responsible for accomplishing the task.

Responsibility for accomplishing a task is never assigned to a committee. Responsibility is assigned to one person working with a group of individuals. This person is known as the "prime mover."

ACTION PLAN

Task	Who Involved (* indicates prime mover)	By When

The meeting is evaluated: participants review what made for a successful meeting and what changes they would recommend for the future.

EVALUATION OF THE MEETING

<p>+</p> <p>What worked</p>	<p>Δ</p> <p>What changes should we make</p>
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Notes are written up and distributed to all participants and those absent from the meeting.

ASSESSING YOUR MEETINGS

(STAR * THE ITEMS BELOW THAT WILL MAKE YOUR MEETINGS MORE EFFECTIVE)

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE AGENDA

- There is sufficient pre-meeting planning:
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CLARIFYING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MEETING

- Roles are clearly understood and assigned to appropriate individuals.
 - Facilitating the meeting
 - What is facilitation? Facilitation includes:
 - * keeping group focused and on time
 - * getting agreements
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 - * listening
 - * encouraging participation
 - * making sure that everyone has a chance to contribute ideas
 - * paying attention to meeting process(es)
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 - Participating
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- The meeting leader (chair) contributes ideas but does not dominate.
- Everyone in the meeting participates.
- Participants, chair, and facilitator all share responsibility for success of meeting: everyone is a "facilitative" group member.

PROMOTING SUCCESSFUL MEETING PROCESSES

- Attention is paid to both the process (how) and the content (what) of the meeting.
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- Key "stakeholders" are well represented and involved in the decision-making process. This would include:
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GUARANTEEING SUCCESSFUL FOLLOW-THROUGH AND EFFECTIVE FUTURE MEETINGS

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- Responsibility for accomplishing a task is never assigned to a committee. Responsibility is assigned to one person working with a group of individuals. This person is known as the "prime mover."

- The meeting is evaluated: participants review what made for a successful meeting and what changes they would recommend for the future.

- Notes are written up and distributed to all participants and those absent from the meeting.