BASIC FACILITATION

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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FACILITATOR TOOLS

Module Objectives

- To define the desired outcome(s) – develop problem statements
- To plan an approach for making decisions
- To apply Problem Solving and Decision Making Tools For:
  - Gathering information
  - Analyzing cause and effect
  - Reducing Data
  - Making decisions reaching consensus

It is essential for a team to have a good command of team tools in order to be successful. The tools are used to help team members reach consensus decisions in an effective manner. The tools can be grouped into problem identification, generating ides, shorten the list of ideas and problem analysis tools. There are some tools that can be used in accomplishing tasks in more than one group. The following table lists some of the tools in each category.

Problem Identification	**Generating Ideas**	**Shorten List of Ideas**	**Analyze the Problem**
Defining the Problem **Page 58**	Brainstorming **Page 63**	$10 Voting **Page 65**	Check Sheet **Page 62**
Problem Specification Worksheet **Page 59**	Nominal Group Technique **Page 70**	Multi-Voting **Page 66**	Force Field Analysis **Page 72**
Establishing a Goal **Page 61**	Force Field Analysis **Page 72**		Evaluation Worksheet **Page 68**
Check Sheet **Page 62**			Nominal Group Technique **Page 70**

Problem Specification Worksheet

When to use: To help define and specify the problem. It is important to state the problem clearly and accurately in order to reduce the time spent in solving the problem.

How to do it:

- Using the problem specification worksheet on the next page, write the problem as it is currently stated in the first section under the, " Initial Definition of the Problem heading."
- Next, answer the seven questions under the heading of, " What Do You Know about the Problem?" This is done to assist in revising the problem statement so that it is more easily understood.
- Add any other information that is needed about the problem under the heading "What Other Information Do We Need?"
- Then write the revised definition of the problem in the last section of the form.

How to use it: The problem specification worksheet will yield a more specific, better-understood definition of the problem

Problem Specification Worksheet

Initial Definition of the Problem:
What Do You Know about the Problem?
What is occurring?
What is the evidence the problem exists?
Where does it occur?
Where doesn't it occur?
When does it occur?
When doesn't it occur?
How extensive is it?
What Other Information Do We Need?
Revised Definition of the Problem:

ESTABLISHING A GOAL

Setting a Goal

Setting a goal is a critical step in effecting improvement. Developing a goal is a critical first step in improving a team's performance. A well-developed goal should have the following characteristics:

- S – Specific – The goal must be specific in what you want to accomplish.
- M – Measurable – The goal must be measurable, in terms of numbers or units, so you know when the goal is achieved.
- A – Attainable – Is the goal realistic and can it be achieved with the available resources.
- R – Relevant – Is the goal relevant to our mission and does it help satisfy customer needs.
- T – Time – What is the time frame for achieving the goal.

Goal Format

Properly formatting the team's goal is a critical step toward ensuring that the goal is specific in terms of measures and time period. The following format is suggested when writing a goal statement:

- To - improve by increasing or decreasing
- The – a description of what is to be changed
- From – the current level of performance to the desired level of performance
- By – the time frame in which the objective will be accomplished

If our goal was to decease the number of customer complaints about service in the Perfect WU, the following goal could be developed:

- **To decrease the average number of customer complaints in the Perfect WU from 12 per month, to 6 per month starting January 1, 2004, and ending June 30, 2004.**

Check Sheet

When to Use: A form used to determine how often any event occurs. It gathers data on any item that needs to be measured to determine if a pattern exists.

How to do it:

- Agree on the item that will be measured.
- Agree on the time period to collect the data.
- Design a form that is easy to use and analyze.
- Collect the data in an honest and consistent manner. Allow time for the data collection task.
- Follow the example shown below.

Check Sheet – Great Local Work Unit - Customer Complaints

Customer Complaints	August 03	September 03	October 03	Total
Waited too long	I I I I	I I I	I I I	10
Rude treatment	I I I	I I	I I	7
Need different hours	I I I I	I I I I	I I I	11
Not enough parking	I I I I I I	I I I I	I I I	13
Must drive too far for service	I I	I I	I	5
Total	19	15	12	46

How to use it: The data collected can then be use to develop solutions for the most important problems that are contributing to customer dissatisfaction.

Brainstorming

When to Use: To generate many ideas about a problem, or topic.

How to do it:

- Place the problem or topic on the top of a flipchart sheet.
- Have each team member silently make a list of items they would like listed on the flipchart. **Use only one word or a phrase.**

Structured brainstorming:

- Solicit one idea from each team member in sequence.
- Team members without an idea can say, " pass."
- A complete round of passes ends the session.
- The advantage of structured brainstorming is that each member has an equal opportunity to participate, regardless of rank or personality.
- It does lack spontaneity and can be rigid.

Unstructured (free–form) brainstorming:

- Team members contribute ideas as they come to mind.
- The advantage is that team members can build off of each other's ideas. It creates a relaxed atmosphere.
- Disadvantage – less assertive or lower ranking members may not contribute.

Points to remember:

- **Never judge ideas as they are generated.** The goal is to generate a lot of ideas in a short time. Analysis will be done later.
- **Don't quit at first lull.** Research indicates that most of the best ideas occur during the last part of the session. Encourage members to push through two or three lulls.
- **Write ideas down exactly as they were offered**. When you condense an idea to one or two words you are doing analysis, which should be done later.
- **Encourage outrageous ideas**. These ideas may not be practical, but they may start the flow of more creative ideas.
- **Try to have a diverse group when possible.** Involve process owners, customers, and suppliers to obtain diverse ideas.

Next Steps

- When the brainstorming session is finished, then you must **clarify and combine** the items that have been listed.
- **First Clarify** - by asking the members if there are any items listed that they don't understand well enough to cast a vote for a particular item. If so, ask the member who suggested the item to explain what they meant. More words can be added to add clarity.

Second Combine - by asking if there are any items that could be combined. Members then suggest possible combinations. To determine if the items can be combined you must go to the member or members who suggested the items for their approval. If the member who suggested the item does not want the item combined then the discussion is ended.

DANGER

- **Only combine items that are the same or nearly the same! Do not group items because you loose the specificity of the item.**
- For example if there are several types of budgets listed combining them in to budget you loose how to deal with a specific item listed like travel budget.

$ 10 Voting

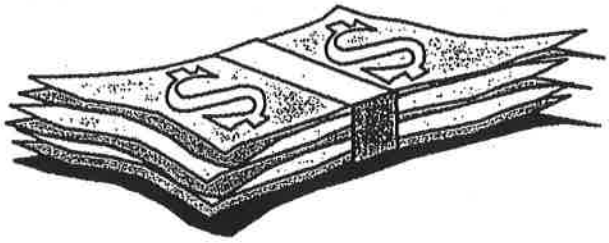
What it is:
A voting tool that teams can use to prioritize and or reduce a large list of brainstormed items to a manageable size.

How to do it:

- Number each item on the brainstormed list.
- Give each team member $10 to allocate to the items they feel are the most important. Members can then use the $10 by using a minimum of $1 up to a maximum of $5 to their selected items until all of the $10 is used.
  Remember use at least $1 and no more than $5 one any one item.
- Total the "dollars spent" on each individual item.
- The tabulated dollar totals can then be used to prioritize the list.
- Items can be dropped that were allocated low dollar amounts.

Helpful hints:

- No credit is given.
- Team members can only "spend" $10.
- Team members must spend whole dollars.



Multi-Voting

What it is:

Multi-voting is a quick and easy way for a group to prioritize a list of brainstormed items. This technique helps you:

- Prioritize a large list of items without creating a "win-loose" in the group that generates the list.
- Separate the "vital few" items from the "trivial many" on a large list.

How to do it:

Empower. Number the items on the list and give each team member a number of votes equal to about half of the number of items on the list (e.g., 10 votes for a 20 item list). **The minimum number of votes you can place on an item is one (1) and a maximum of five (5).**

Vote. Have the members vote individually without discussion and record their choices on a sheet of paper. When all members have their individual sheets completed have all come to the front of the room and record their votes on the flip chart sheets using colored adhesive dots or colored markers. **Use slash marks for the number of votes instead of writing the number**. This avoids confusion when totaling the votes.

Tabulate. Add the votes received for each item and record the total in a bright color near each item.

Select the top four to six items. Discuss where the cut-off should occur to select the top four to six items. Look for natural breaks between the totals for each item (e.g., there may be a substantial difference in the total between the top items and the next group).

Helpful hints:

- You are now ready to use another tool to select the "best" item to address.

- Multi-voting is best suited for large groups and long lists but, is also applicable for small groups and shorter lists. Its simplicity makes it very quick and easy to use.

Multi-Voting Example:

Colleagues in a local work unit were asked why meetings they attend were not as productive as they could have been. A brainstorming session produced the following list of problems:

1. No agenda
2. No clear purpose
3. Going off on tangents
4. Extraneous topics
5. Unproductive
6. Time spent on travel
7. Money spent on travel
8. Too much "dog and pony"
9. Problems not mentioned
10. Unclear information/direction
11. Few meaningful topics
12. Poor parking
13. Side Conversations
14. Several colleagues were disruptive.

To reduce this list to a manageable size, each team member was give 7 votes (half of the total of 14 items). The problems received the following votes:

1. No agenda	1
2. No clear purpose	6
3. Going off on tangents	5
4. Extraneous topics	1
5. Unproductive	2
6. Time spent on travel	2
7. Money spent on travel	1
8. Too much "dog and pony"	2
9. Problems not mentioned	4
10. Unclear information	2
11. Few meaningful topics	1
12. Poor parking	1
13. Side Conversations	6
14. Several colleagues were disruptive.	4

As a result of the vote, the team chose to focus on the following problems 2,3,9,13,14. Another tool can now be used to identify the first problem they will work on solving.

EVALUATION WORKSHEET

When to Use: To assist in choosing the best solution from a few alternatives. Selecting the "best" solution calls for a process that involves all team members. Making the decision together helps to ensure the ownership and commitment that will be needed to have the solution implemented.

How to do it: The evaluation worksheet on the next page, must be completed using the following steps.

- In column 1 list the alternative solutions /ideas/ options that the team has selected. There should be a limited number about five or less.
- At the top of columns 2 – 6 list the criteria that will be used to evaluate each of the options. The follow criteria can be used or the team may develop their own criteria.
- **Effect on the problem.** Will the proposed solution solve the problem? Look for solutions that produce a clear, measurable impact on the problem.
- **Practicality**. Can the solution be implemented? If a solution can't be implemented, it is not practical.
- **Cost.** What will it cost to implement this solution? Simple, inexpensive solutions are preferable. Low cost receives a high score such as #5 and high cost receives a low score such as a #1.
- **Acceptance.** Will management and other colleagues who might be affected accept the solution? Look at the effect of the solution on others.
- **Time.** Can the solution be implemented within a reasonable time period?
- Enter options or solutions in column 1 and then have the team evaluate each of the options/solutions against each of the listed criteria using a scale of:
  - 5 for excellent
  - 3 for average
  - 1 for poor
- Then total the scores and determine which option is best through the total vote received and general team discussion.

EVALUATION WORKSHEET

5 = Excellent
3 = Average
1 = Poor

Criteria

Options	Effect on problem	Practicality	Cost	Acceptance	Time	Total
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Nominal Group Technique

What it is:

Nominal group technique is a structured method that a group can use to generate and prioritize items on a list. This method uses priorities of each group member to discover the overall priorities of the group. Nominal group technique helps you:

- Generate and prioritize a list of ideas about a problem or topic.
- Make decisions using inputs from *all* participants.

How to do it:

Generate ideas. Give team members one or two minutes to silently brainstorming and prepare a list of their ideas. Emphasize the ideas should be limited to one word or a phrase. Then obtain inputs from members in a structured brainstorming session. Clarify and combine ideas. Only combine ideas that are about the same, do not group similar ideas.

Assign a letter to each idea. For example, for eight ideas, you would assign the letters A through G.

List the letters. Have each person in the group write the assigned letters on a piece of paper.

Prioritize the lists. Have each person prioritize their list by writing a number beside each letter. If there are eight ideas, then "8" is written beside the letter corresponding to the most important idea. This is repeated for each number until "1" is written beside the letter corresponding to the least important idea. Each number (1 through 8) is used *only once* by each group member.

Compute the group total for each letter. The letter with the highest score is the idea with the highest priority, and the letter with the lowest score has the lowest priority.

Nominal Group Technique Example:

The following office problems were identified in a brainstorming session:

A. Ineffective organizational structure.

B. Poor communications outside the office.

C. Lack of training.

D. Poor communications within the office.

E. Unclear mission and objectives.

F. Poor distribution of office mail.

G. Lack of feedback on reports on management.

Each team member then writes the letters A through G on a piece of paper and prioritized each problem from 1 to 7 (lowest to highest), using each number only once. The results were summarized as follows:

Problem	1	2	Person 3	4	5	Total	Priority	Results
A	6	5	7	5	6	29	#2	
B	3	2	4	1	3	13	#5	
C	1	1	2	2	2	8	#7	Lowest
D	4	4	5	6	4	23	#4	
E	7	7	6	7	5	32	#1	Highest
F	2	3	1	3	3	10	#6	
G	5	6	3	4	7	25	#3	

The #1 priority problem identified by the team was "E" – Unclear mission and objectives.

Force Field Analysis

What it is:

Force field analysis is a tool that helps identify and visualize the relationships of the significant promoting and inhibiting forces that influence a problem or goal. It can be used to:

- Identify key factors (forces) that promote or hinder the solution of a problem or the achievement of a goal.
- Identify improvement opportunities.

How to do it:

Define the objective. Clearly identify the problem to be analyzed or the goal to be achieved.

List the forces. List the key factors that promote or hinder the achievement of your goal or the resolution of your problem. Teams should use an idea generation technique, such as brainstorming, to identify the factors. Develop two lists: one for promoting forces and one for hindering forces.

Prioritize. Prioritize the forces in each list according to their degree of impact on the problem or goal.

Implement. Minimize or weaken the hindering forces and maximize or strengthen the promoting forces.

Force Field Analysis Example

Goal: To Quit Smoking

Promoting Forces	Inhibiting Forces
Better health →	← Habitual behavior
Save money →	← Need for nicotine
Won't have to leave the building every hour →	← Need to have something in mouth
Family won't breath smoke →	← Gain weight every time I try to quit
Food will taste better →	← Need to have fingers occupied

PREPARING A FACILITATOR PLAN

In order for a meeting facilitator to be effective a plan must be developed to ensure that the meeting purpose and objectives will be met. Remember that that the facilitator is in charge of meeting process, and the participants are in charge of meeting content.

Meeting Details

To ensure that all details concerning the meeting are addressed the following list of items should be completed:

1. Meet with the person who is in charge of the meeting and establish the meeting purpose, objectives, time and location.
2. Identify the products that must be produced at the meeting.
3. Determine how many participants will attend the meeting and identify any special roles they might have.
4. List and be sure that the following meeting requirements are met.
    - Adequate room size with the necessary number of tables and chairs.
    - All necessary equipment including flipcharts, projectors, screens, markers, etc.
    - Space for breakout sessions.
    - Refreshments
    - Identify the recorder, if needed, and meet with that person to discuss their role.
    - Prepare a parking lot sheet, proposed ground rules, and the meeting purpose.

Note: Use the Equipment and Supplies – Sample Planning List at the end of this module to ensure that all items needed are considered.

Developing the Plan

To develop an effective facilitator plan the following steps should be followed:

1. Identify the products that must be produced at the meeting.
2. List the tasks that must be completed to produce the products.
3. Select the process that will be followed and the facilitator tools that will be used to complete the identified tasks. Be sure to plan for using more than one tool to produce a product because the primary tool that will be used may not work and another tool must be substituted.
4. The following facilitator plan example can be used to develop a plan and help ensure that the next meeting facilitated will be successful. Refer to the completed plan example for ideas on how to develop a plan.
5. The blank facilitator plan can be used to develop future plans. There is also a blank plan in the Appendix for future use.

FACILITATOR PLAN

Step	Activities/Actions	Process and Tools	Product Produced
1	Meet with meeting leader and identifying the meeting purpose, desired outcomes, location, and number of participants	Flip chart sheets	Meeting purpose and outcomes sheet
2	Set up meeting room including the equipment, workbooks, name cards, parking lot and rules sheets.	Flip chart sheets	Parking lot and ground rules sheet
3	Greet participants	Flip chart sheet	Welcome sheet
4	Discuss meeting purpose	Flip chart sheet	Meeting purpose sheet
5	Prepare a flip chart with the task at the top of "ways to better serve customers"	Brainstorm (round robin) ways to better serve customers	List of ways to better serve customers in the WU
6	Reduce items on the developed list	$ Vote	A list of the top five items
7	Select the best way to better serve the customer from the top five	Evaluation Worksheet	The best way to better serve the customer
8	Identify the driving and restraining forces affecting the best way to serve the customer	Force Field Analysis	A list of the forces driving the implementation of the best alternative and a list of the restraining forces that must be addressed before implementation can occur
9	Develop an action plan to deal with the restraining forces	Action plan	Completed action plan
10	Meeting evaluation	Meeting evaluation Sheet	Meeting evaluation data

FACILITATOR PLAN

Steps	Activities/Actions	Process and Tools	Products Produced