



**COLLABORATIVE  
Growth®**

*Connecting People, Purpose & Productivity!*

## **Facilitation Supports Collaborative Decision-Making**

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*“There are two ways of being creative. One can sing and dance. Or one can create an environment in which singers and dancers flourish.” Warren Bennis*

Good facilitators create a curious and safe environment that promotes creative and sustainable decision-making. Organizations seek facilitation when they value an integrated group process with lasting results. A well facilitated process focuses on building Collaborative Intelligence™. When working with Boards and Commissions, it’s important to design a process that support the 3- pronged modes of governance: Strategic, Fiduciary and Generative. A good facilitator works with the leaders to ensure a well-designed and run event, which can take many shapes and sizes. It can be an offsite, a retreat/advance, a high conflict resolution session or a discussion by a well-functioning team looking to expand their skills. There are times we help an organization with employees in conflict select between a facilitated process and a mediated process. In mediation a neutral third party assists others in arriving at a mutually acceptable decision, but doesn’t add his or her own thoughts to the process. In facilitation, the facilitator actively assists the parties in brainstorming options and solutions. It is always important, though, that the decisions are made by the participants.

Collaborative Growth provides facilitation for elected boards and commissions, executive sessions, organizational retreats or advances and employees in conflict. There are many elements in common for all the processes. Possibly the most important is that the facilitator elegantly promotes the full participation by all parties. This calls for guiding those who want to over-participate to pull back on their comments while the facilitator invites the more quiet introverts to share their insights and questions.

At a recent facilitation a participant commented on the great benefit he and others were receiving because of our reading and responding to the non-verbal messages from the team members. It is important for the facilitator to notice when someone wants to speak, acknowledge that and then remember to give that person the opportunity to speak. Non-verbal communication can also include indications of discomfort with a topic such that the facilitator calls on the person making his or her participation safe, saying something such as “Jason, give us your thoughts on the challenges or possible concerns with this approach.”

Facilitation benefits include:

- The comfort for participants is increased because they know they will all receive help in speaking up with balance and respect for one another.
- The leader can participate as he or she doesn’t have to be in charge of managing everyone else’s participation.

- A highly interactive and engaging process can occur.
- The facilitator structures the topics without stifling creativity thus helping the group take time to vet a decision and then consider all aspects of implementing and working with the decision.
- The facilitator guides the group to apply reality testing to potential decisions and to assess if it can get done and by when and to identify and assign responsible parties.
- The facilitator can help the participants combine their EQ and their IQ.

Good facilitation is welcomed by organizations when done well. That means it is focused on assisting all parties to participate, reach sustainable solutions and along the way provide assistance in resolving conflict and exploring difficult topics. Curiosity is welcome and promoted. Imagine what can be created - Albert Einstein once said, "I have no special talent. I am only passionately curious." That's the attitude to take into a facilitated session.