



Why use a facilitator?

If a strategic planning or team meeting is important enough for your key people to devote their time to it, you deserve a neutral facilitator to ensure your meeting flows smoothly, everyone participates and difficult decisions are made.

Even when a team member has the requisite skills to facilitate your meeting, it is unfair to restrict their contribution. A facilitator sets aside their personal opinions and stands apart from the outcome of a meeting, making their contribution by guiding the process. A good facilitator keeps discussion focussed, on track and on time, prevents a department or an individual dominating or being overlooked and teases out diverse opinions, offers structure, an impartial perspective and expert feedback, and ensures all participants are able to interact constructively. This is almost impossible for someone with a vested interest, or strong opinions or ideas to contribute to the meeting, to do well.

An independent, professional facilitator will make your meetings more effective and productive by ensuring all members are able to participate fully and contribute actively.

Use an experienced, external facilitator to:

- Establish a climate of openness
- Build consensus
- Overcome conflict or controversy
- Provide objective guidance
- Generate new ideas
- Achieve closure
- Initiate change by securing group commitment to your plan or outcome
- Prevent participants rehashing entrenched positions
- Minimise dominant personalities, departmental differences and internal politics
- Bring new perspectives, experience and approaches to your meeting
- Benchmark your expectations and intentions against those of other organisations through the facilitator's experience and insight
- Keep discussions realistic and focussed
- Open communication, initiate discussion and facilitate better communication
- Establish useful ground rules and ensure everyone contributes
- Avoid your strategic planning meeting turning into an extended staff meeting
- Encourage different voices and opinions without wasting time
- Provide structure and manage the process
- Energise and pace the group through different activities, stages and dynamics
- Challenge the participant's assumptions
- Mobilise the group's resources to solve problems or achieve your goals
- Foster new or creative approaches
- Encourage appropriate risk taking
- Tackle difficult decisions and situations
- Secure the support of key people.

A facilitator is an expert in managing the process and dynamics of the group that is doing the work. There is no 'right' way to facilitate and a good facilitator is flexible and responsive to the needs of the group. Each facilitator brings their individual expertise, experience and style.



When will a facilitator add value?

An effective facilitator makes it easier for others to produce their own results. By structuring a program skilfully and asking just the right question at the right time, an independent facilitator can add value to a wide range of critical meetings, events and situations.

Consider using an external facilitator for all the following types of events:

- Strategic planning
- Opportunity identification and assessment programs
- Off site planning events
- Team or department planning meetings
- Operational planning
- Change implementation programs
- Organisational restructures
- Project kick-off meetings
- Evaluation sessions
- Strategy review meetings
- Crisis planning sessions
- Risk identification assessments
- Incident or 'near miss' reviews
- Lessons learned evaluations
- Community liaison meetings
- Stakeholder consultative meetings
- Issue management programs
- Industry association meetings
- Public meetings
- Policy development and response
- Key account liaison events
- Board planning and evaluation
- Focus groups
- Retreats
- Conferences
- Goal setting meetings
- Team building events
- Employee forums
- Staff award or recognition functions
- Service improvement projects
- Implementation sessions
- Project debriefs
- Quarterly or Annual reviews of service, performance etc
- Mentor/mentee meetings and mentoring programs
- Leadership and management development programs or retreats.

"Thank you very much for your excellent facilitation during our Strategic Planning Meeting ... I have heard great praise from the participants after the meeting. One particularly seasoned participant described it as the best strategic meeting she had ever attended."

*Kevin Murray, Director,
Craft Victoria*

"The Directors of Econnect Communication undertook a half day workshop with Kerrie which we found expertly facilitated. ... We would and have recommended Kerrie to others."

*Lin Martin, Director,
Econnect Communication*

Contact KMG Consulting on 03-9859 3924 today for more details about how our facilitation services can help make your meetings more successful and effective. We guarantee our work.