



## How to Facilitate a Team

*If you want to improve teamwork or perfect your own facilitation skills, this book is the place to start.*

BY JILL MUEHRCKE

### ***The Compleat Facilitator: A Guide***

*By Barry J. Roberts, Kevin Upton, and the Howick Associates QI Team. Published by Howick Associates, Madison, Wisconsin. 96 pages. Softcover. Available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations' Resource Center, 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719 (800-424-7367).*

One of the best things you can do for your organization is to help your employees acquire new problem-solving and interaction skills. At the top of this skills list is teamwork.

Teams have proven to be more successful than individuals in creating high-quality organizations. But good teams don't just happen. To be successful, they must be scrupulously planned and managed.

One of the key ingredients is the team facilitator, as this crisply written book makes clear. The authors put it

like this: "Your role as facilitator is objective and impartial. You will have to provide candid feedback on what's going on with the team and offer suggestions that will help turn the group of individuals into an effective team. When you are successful, the team will learn to function successfully without you."

The authors are staff members of Howick Associates, a group which has provided training programs for many years. Their practical advice comes from these programs, from client feedback sessions, and from ideas shared at focus groups.

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### **Tips for Building Consensus**

- Don't force people to give in just to avoid conflict. This may result in a "false consensus," in which you assume people support the decision, but they really don't.
- Seek ways to combine different points and different positions.
- Have those with authority state their opinions last.
- Schedule plenty of time. Consensus cannot be rushed.
- Avoid reducing the decision to a vote.
- Encourage everyone to participate.

From *The Compleat Facilitator: A Guide*.

Like Izaak Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, from which its title is taken, the book is both witty and comprehensive. The authors have sprinkled it with real-world examples and user-friendly devices. They include helpful tips and quotes, how-to and what-if boxes, and even indexes to boxes and to key words in the text.

If you are interested in launching or improving teamwork in your organization (and every nonprofit should be), this charming book is the place to start. It's also a good starting place if you want to polish your own skills in facilitation—skills which are essential for anyone who wants to lead people.

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