



Tips for Finding a Facilitator

A good facilitator:

- Will guide a meeting, not control the dialog
- Is dynamic
- Can think on his or her feet
- Is creative and flexible
- Has awareness of community
- Has the ability to stay neutral even in a stressful situation
- Knows when to listen and when to interject and summarize
- Knows how to move a group along
- Is a good listener, often listening for what lies beneath what people say
- Pays attention for what is not being said
- Helps participants feel comfortable

The facilitator should be able to help you plan your agenda and have a clear understanding about the goals and objectives of the dialog. The quality of the facilitator will directly contribute to the success of your event.

Find a facilitator to fit your needs:

Go to local leadership organizations such as United Way, your city's chamber of commerce, or community foundations to recommend a good facilitator. Local social service organizations, social justice groups or community colleges are other places to look.

Interview any potential facilitator and get a bio or references. If possible, meet the facilitator in person to be sure he or she is a good fit for the discussion. You need to be comfortable that they'll do a good job. This is especially true if you're paying the person.

National sources to search:

Finding an effective facilitator can be a challenge. Searching the databases of national associations can be a great place to start. Remember, anyone can call themselves a facilitator. It's important to communicate with the person directly and ask for examples of what they've done.

Here are a few Web sites that may help you with your search:

- The National Meeting Facilitator Database at <http://www.nfdb.com/nfdb/> lets you access detailed information about facilitators located around the country—their skills, areas of expertise, past clients, projects, certifications and billing rates.
- The International Association of Facilitators site at <http://www.iaf-world.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=1> lists facilitators by location and includes contact info for regional groups. Once you locate a group in your region, you can contact them directly for recommendations.

