

# DRBF R3 Breakfast Briefings

April 2022

## ***Facilitation Skills for Dispute Boards***

Presenter: Barry Tozer

Dispute Resolution Board Foundation. *Moving projects forward* since 1996.



# Avoidance Role of Dispute Boards

- **“facilitating communications between project participants and encouraging cooperative problem solving and decision making”**
- **“proactive DBs are able to facilitate communications and assist the parties to deal pragmatically with the issues (commercial, technical or legal) that frequently arise in any complex set of contract conditions and specifications”**

[Dispute Board Manual, Chapter 13]

# Good Communications

Communications need to be interactive to be effective  
Active listening and Questioning skills are the primary communication tools for the facilitator

- Listen actively
- Paraphrasing, Mirroring and Reframing
- Questioning
- Collect and synthesize ideas; but Stay-on-track
- Summarising; Give-and–receive feedback

# Asking the Right Questions?

‘Open’ questions always

- Fact-finding questions
- Feeling-finding questions
- Tell-me-more questions
- Third-party questions
- Magic-wand questions

# Agenda Setting

- **What are the goals of the planned DAB meeting?**
- **What activities will meet those goals?**

Allow time:

- for introductions (banter or “check-ins”)
- to review status of actions assigned in previous meetings
- for discussions, evaluation and resolution of issues of concern

Ensure meetings are highly focussed and results-oriented around the specific topics to be covered, their order and timing

# Ground Rules

**Set ‘ground rules’ – which establish the overall “personality” of the meeting. Is it a meeting you would enjoy attending?**

- ➔ Punctuality – meetings commence and conclude on time.
- ➔ Focus on meeting priorities -businesslike but not abrupt.
- ➔ Participation by all attendees – seek opinions, agreement from all
- ➔ Politeness. No interruptions or side conversations. No personal abuse or raised voices

# Meeting Management

→ Review Agenda at start but adapt if good progress is made

Record Minutes of all major items discussed during meeting and actions to be taken after the meeting

*(Minutes can be the most useful part of the meeting by ensuring all actions noted are completed)*

→ Time management – extend or adjourn?

→ Evaluation during meeting progress – satisfaction checks?

→ Closing meetings – review actions, set details for next meeting

→ Invitees to meetings?

# First Impressions? First DAB Meeting

Building trust – two groups of meeting participants with different perspectives – to be treated equally by DAB

Some key attributes to build trust with meeting participants.

- Commitment
- Openness
- Knowledge
- Empathy\*\*



# Facilitation Workshop to Resolve Issues

Facilitator provides structure for engagement by group

- Prepares the group for undertaking the task
- Assists the group to perform the task
- Including exploring options
  - such as a Principal's wish-list?
- Facilitates decision-making by the group
- Conducts reviews, evaluation and follow up

# Reflection and Review

Learn from your experience – from mistakes.

Reconstruct, review positives, assess negatives

Shape a positive outcome, imagine it, be specific

- Learn about facilitation – take a course
- Develop your own model of facilitation
- Use self-assessment tools - questionnaires
- Plan ahead but always review

# Useful Guidelines for DAB Facilitators

- Always try to be helpful
- Always stay in touch with the current reality
- Accept your ignorance
- Everything you do is an intervention
- The parties own the problem and the solution
- Go with the flow
- Be constructively opportunistic with interventions
- Everything is a source of data
- Learn from inevitable errors
- When in doubt, share the problem

# Facilitation Skill Levels

Review the skill sets identified in the following slides and undertake a self-assessment to identify your current strengths and future training that may be required in facilitation skills

[Adapted from: “*Facilitation with Ease!*”, Ingrid Benz & Jossey-Bass, Inc. ©2000]

# Level I - DB member

- Understanding concepts, values and beliefs
- Use of facilitative behaviours such as active listening, paraphrasing, questioning, summarising
- Managing time
- Encouraging participation
- Keeping clear and accurate notes
- Using basic tools like problem solving and action planning

## Level 2 - DB Chair

- Mastering process tools
- Designing meetings
- Skilled at using the right decision-making method, achieving consensus and getting true closure
- Handling feedback activities and conducting process checks
- Good at managing meetings in an effective manner
- Able to help a group set goals and objectives that are measurable
- Skilled at checking assumptions and challenging ideas

## Level 3 - Experienced DB Chair

- Skilled at managing conflict and making intermediate interventions
- Able to deal with resistance and personal attacks
- Making process design changes on the spot
- Sizing up a group and selecting strategies for its development
- Able to design and conduct interviews and focus groups
- Consolidating ideas from a mass of information into coherent summaries

# QUESTIONS / COMMENTS



## DRBF

- Website: [www.drb.org](http://www.drb.org)
- Email: [info@drb.org](mailto:info@drb.org)

## DRBF Region 3

- Website: [www.drbf.org.au](http://www.drbf.org.au)
- Email: [admin@drbf.org.au](mailto:admin@drbf.org.au)