FACILITATOR VS MODERATOR

The terms "facilitator" and "moderator" are often used interchangeably, but they define distinct roles in a program or session. Below is a breakdown of the key responsibilities of both to help you decide which is best suited for your needs.

FACILITATOR

A facilitator guides a group through a process to achieve a specific goal, focusing on creating a collaborative environment and ensuring all voices are heard. Facilitators are neutral.

Key Responsibilities

- Designing the program or session flow with planned activities and discussion points to achieve the desired outcome
- Setting the ground rules to establish guidelines for participation and respectful interaction
- Encouraging participation to ensure all voices are heard
- Managing group dynamics by addressing conflicts, managing dominant personalities, and fostering collaboration
- Using facilitation methods like brainstorming, breakout groups, and consensus-building exercises
- Ensuring outcomes are met
- Summarizing agreements and the next steps by clearly outlining what was decided and what actions will follow

Tips for Facilitating

- Keep energy levels high.
  - Use a quick ice breaker that gets people moving and/or conversing.
  - Take a quick break for a stretch when the energy level is low.
  - High five after an exercise. While it may sound simple, it is a quick way to energize individuals.
- Give clear instructions.
- Have a plan but be adaptable based on the participants in the group.

MODERATOR

A moderator primarily manages the flow of a program or session, keeping it on track and ensuring it adheres to a specific agenda or format.

Key Responsibilities

- Opening the program by welcoming the participants, introducing the topic, and providing context.
- Introducing speakers by sharing a brief background on each to set the stage for the program
- Monitoring and enforcing time limits for speakers and Q&A
- Managing transitions between speakers and topics
- Facilitating the Q&A session by selecting questions from the audience and directing them to the appropriate speaker
- Redirecting speakers or participants who stray from the topic
- Summarizing key points by briefly highlighting important takeaways
- Closing the session by thanking the speakers and the audience

Tips for Moderating

- Prepare questions and background information on topic.
- Meet speakers prior to the program.
- Keep track of time.