

TEN REASONS FOR HIRING A PROFESSIONAL FACILITATOR

Facilitating a retreat, strategic plan or a divided group takes skill, energy and experience. While some nonprofit leaders have the skills internally to facilitate a retreat or strategic plan, here are ten reasons hiring a professional facilitator may be the right choice for your organization.

1. Events facilitated by a professional engage the imagination and generate energy and ownership. They are less likely to be boring, frustrating or wasteful.
2. Experience. A professional facilitator has worked with dozens of groups and is equipped to respond to nearly every setting imaginable.
3. A professional facilitator is neutral. He or she brings objectivity and focuses on the best process. Internal facilitators are never fully neutral. An external facilitator sees and hears what an insider cannot.
4. A professional facilitator asks dozens of questions. Consulting is about listening. Creative questions allow a collective picture of the organization to emerge prior to a strategy event. This listening prepares the consultant to facilitate with knowledge and skill.
5. A professional facilitator designs a planning process that is unique to you. Every group is different. Missions vary. People are different. The strategic challenges differ. An experienced facilitator creates meeting designs with you from a reservoir of applications that will fit you.
6. Professional facilitators are avid readers in the art of strategic thinking and professional facilitation. They bring a best-practices mind-set to their work.
7. A skilled facilitator can manage conflict with poise and remain objective. Conflict becomes a creative tool rather than something to be anxious about.
8. A professional facilitator will help your group get specific about action plans. He or she will not let you get stuck with vague generalities. The goal of strategy is a renewed action plan demanding to be implemented.
9. Professional facilitators bring a love of people and facilitating groups. They dream about facilitating their next gig. They bring joy and humor to your group.
10. A professional facilitator brings the intangible: a spirit that draws people together, an emotional maturity that helps the group remain focused and an enthusiasm that helps the group remain engaged.

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