

## 14 Characteristics of a Successful Team Building Facilitator



A skilled facilitator brings their unique personality to every session.

However, the best facilitators share these key characteristics.



Characteristic	Description
<b>Friendly</b>	Sets a welcoming tone, creating a comfortable atmosphere for participants.
<b>Gentle</b>	Addresses conflict with care, ensuring all participants feel heard and respected.
<b>Playful</b>	Uses humor responsibly to keep sessions lively and engaging.
<b>Collaborative</b>	Shapes discussions through tone, word choice, and environmental setup.
<b>Outcome-Driven</b>	Keeps conversations aligned with the workshop's core objectives.
<b>Engaging</b>	Encourages physical and mental involvement to boost interaction.
<b>Attentive</b>	Observe body language, listen actively, and notice group dynamics.
<b>Helpful</b>	Guides participants to connect personal motivations with team goals.
<b>Non-Judgmental</b>	Facilitates objectively, setting aside personal beliefs to support open discussions.

<b>Facilitative</b>	Uses tools strategically to drive meaningful outcomes.
<b>Practical</b>	Anticipates barriers and proactively prepares solutions to overcome them.
<b>Self-Reflecting</b>	Evaluate personal effectiveness and prepare for unexpected challenges.
<b>Focused</b>	Stays one step ahead of discussions, strategically guiding the process.
<b>Mature</b>	Develops a unique facilitation style, rather than mimicking others.

### **Friendly**

The facilitator sets the tone for the workshop. When teammates walk in feeling welcomed and excited to be there, you know the facilitator has played a key role in creating that atmosphere. With the best facilitators, you feel like you're being welcomed into their home.

### **Collaborative**

Facilitators use their body language, tone of voice, and word choice to support workshop outcomes. They also use their environment strategically.

By setting the tone and carefully arranging the room, facilitators can create a professional yet comfortable atmosphere that encourages real discussion amongst all teammates. This air of active involvement creates a collaborative learning environment.

**Attentive**

An effective facilitator continually practices seeing, hearing, and feeling the interpersonal dynamics in the room. They watch body language and listen to the tone of voice, looking for patterns. They also observe how listeners react to other speakers' information.

**Facilitative**

It may sound obvious, but good facilitators know how to use facilitative tools. They realize using these tools is the "means" and not the "end," so they do not overuse them. Rather than attempting to facilitate the process perfectly, they maintain focus on achieving the meeting outcome(s).

**Focused**

Excellent facilitators stay one mental step ahead of participants. They continually ask themselves, "What's next on the agenda?" and "How will we get from here to the desired outcome and beyond?" They bring strategic thinking and strategic facilitation into their workshops.

**Gentle**

When there's tension or conflict in the room, effective facilitators don't avoid the problem. Instead, they gently move towards it. They "do no harm" to everyone.

They look at the choices being made by participants. They listen for key points and reflect them back. They are skilled at summarizing. They know how to carefully reflect a situation so participants can see the problem clearly and recognize the necessity for addressing it.

### **Outcome-Driven**

Strong facilitators use the workshop agenda, particularly the meeting's desired outcome, to keep the discussions on track. They keep the outcome firmly implanted in their minds, and they use it as a filter to screen teammate communication.

They constantly ask themselves how the current discussion relates to the overall desired outcome. If it relates, they stay out of the way and let the participants do their work. If the conversation goes off track, they interrupt and ask, "How does this information help achieve our desired outcome?"

### **Helpful**

Instead of asking people to accept the meeting's desired outcomes blindly, good facilitators help participants identify "what's in it for them." Then, they synergize the teammates' motivations to align with the desired meeting outcomes. For important meetings, this work is done before the meeting, not during.

### **Practical**

Successful facilitators know there are two kinds of barriers: processes and people. While planning an important meeting, successful facilitators proactively ask themselves what could go wrong. They identify specific barriers within the team, and they plan ways to prevent these barriers from arising. They also plan how they will intervene if their preventions don't work.

### **Mature**

The most effective facilitators are true to themselves. They know there is no one right way to facilitate. They don't try to mimic other successful facilitators; they find their own voice. They improve and grow their personal facilitation style.

### **Playful**

Facilitators may be humorous, but they never use humor at anyone's expense.

### **Engaging**

Good facilitators look for and take advantage of opportunities to get participants moving. Often, this means getting participants to do something with their entire bodies, not just their minds.

### **Non-Judgmental**

Effective facilitators don't have to be neutral. But they do have to be willing to step aside from their own beliefs and values in order to facilitate objectively. They know how to share their opinions without directing, and regardless of their views, they offer their critical-thinking skills to help the group make the best decision.

### **Self-Reflecting**

Successful facilitators ask themselves these honest questions:

- Do I understand the outcome from the stakeholders' perspectives?
- Have I done my homework, and am I prepared for the unexpected?
- If people get upset or things seem to go wrong in the meeting, do I have a predetermined set of values and principles to guide my choices and interactions?

When a facilitator can answer yes to these questions, they know they're ready.

## About the Author

The "14 Characteristics of a Successful Team Building Facilitator" was created and written by **Dan Hogan**, an Author and **Certified Master Facilitator** with over 40 years of experience in team-building facilitation.

Dan has worked with more than 500 teams globally and is the author of eight how-to books on team-building processes and methods.

Dan specializes in creating practical, real-world solutions to help teams achieve sustainable and meaningful results.

His unique philosophy, **Right-Minded Teamwork**, emphasizes clarity, collaboration, and achieving desired outcomes. You can use all the Right-Minded Teamwork tools and processes in your practice. Check it out soon.

To learn more about Dan and explore his work, visit [Right-Minded Teamwork](#).

*Do No Harm.  
Work As One.®*

**Right-Minded**  
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