



# Facilitation

Many organizations find that they are better able to make meaningful progress on tough issues when they bring in an outside facilitator to help. There are a myriad of reasons to use a facilitator. An experienced facilitator will:

- **Ensure that goals for the session are met.** With so many issues to cover, people naturally find it difficult to focus on one. Nonetheless, without adequate focus your team will come away from their meeting with lots of interesting thoughts on a broad variety of topics, but not necessarily results. A facilitator can ensure that decisions are made.
- **Effectively navigate internal politics.** A facilitator, as a neutral third party, is frequently able to handle delicate political situations that insiders cannot.
- **Help the group to identify and avoid common decision-making errors.** Contrary to popular belief, teams are not particularly effective. In fact, groups are prone to decision-making errors that do not plague individuals. A seasoned facilitator can help your group avoid common traps. Some examples include:
  - **Loss of creativity.** Research shows that without facilitation, group dynamics lead to decreased creativity.
  - **Groupthink.** Ironically, the groups that seem to work the most efficiently together are also those that are least likely to allow truly independent and critical thinking.
  - **Undervaluing opportunity costs.** Psychologically, we tend to overemphasize losses relative to opportunity costs. Your facilitator can help you be more aware of times when ignoring an opportunity is worse than risking a loss.
- **Bring a fresh perspective to old problems.** The more we think about challenges, the more focused we tend to become on specific solutions. A good facilitator can help highlight useful alternatives for a group that is developing tunnel vision.

*Avoid the traps  
that lead to  
paralysis and  
poor decisions.*

To help ensure a successful facilitated session, True North will work with your team to determine the goals for the session, specific concerns of participants, and the desired outcomes.

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