

# Guerrilla Facilitator's Manual

## How to Save Even the WORST Meeting from the Back of the Room

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### **EXTRA: Guerrilla Saves Meeting!**

Remember the last really lousy meeting you had to sit through? Your time was being wasted and yet there was nothing you could do. It wasn't your meeting – you weren't the one leading it!

You were stuck in there with everyone else, just wishing for a fire drill or anything that might spring you outta the room.

Trust me, there will be more of these times in your future ... the meeting is not going well, and yet the meeting leader is not taking action.

From now on there will be a difference! **You have in your hands the secrets of the "Guerrilla Facilitator".**

Now you can save the day, save your whole team... rescue them from their "meeting jail" ... by taking control from the back of the room and you will do it without anyone even noticing.

Through the tactful use of "**Guerrilla Facilitation Skills**", you can ensure a productive meeting even when you are not the one running it. **You can move the team FORWARD from your position in the BACK of the room.**

When you smell that smell of a meeting going sour, that's your cue to step in and save the day as a skilled **Guerrilla Facilitator**.

### **Stay Beneath the Radar**

**The key to Guerrilla Facilitation is to maintain respect.** It is vital that the meeting facilitator saves face. You are not going to take

over; you are a Guerrilla and will operate in "Stealth Mode".

Even though you are working from the back of the room, when you play the Guerrilla well everyone will thank you afterwards... even the person who was actually facilitating.

### **The 5 Key Questions of Guerrilla Facilitation**

**Each has two parts:**

- **Recognizing the meeting is headed for trouble.**
- **Asking a skillful question that innocently brings the group back on track.**

#### **1) The Objective is not the Agenda.**

**The most important aspect of any meeting is the Session Objective.**

So often the meeting gets off track right away by focusing on the agenda, rather than the objective of the meeting – "WHY" you are all here in the first place. The agenda is only a tool you use to reach the Session Objective.

If the meeting leader starts by first giving the agenda feel free to dive in right away and ask,

**"Excuse me, I may have missed it ...but could you take a second to go over the overall objective of this meeting and what we need to have when we are finished?"**

The Session Objective is the most important shared piece of information in the room. Make sure everyone knows **why you are there** before

you begin. That way you know when you are off track and also know when the meeting is done.

## 2) Keep the Discussion on Track

How many times have you seen the discussion wander way off track and get lost in side channels that go nowhere? That's usually when everyone starts to squirm and tap their pens. Well, now, when the group heads off topic, ask,

**"Excuse me, it seems to me some important points are being made here, yet at the same time we have a lot to cover to achieve our meeting objective. I'm wondering how it would be to put these ideas temporarily on the parking lot and then get back to our Session Objective?"**

The **Parking Lot** is your friend when the discussions veer off topic into subjects which are important and yet do not help you accomplish the meeting objective.

Capture the "off topic" idea on a chart page labeled "**Parking Lot**" and get the group back on track.

## 3) Documenting Decisions

Decisions that are not written down and action plans that are not documented will not get done – Period. Don't let the group move on without making a written record of your work.

If a decision is made or an action agreed on and the discussion is about to move onto another topic without documenting it, ask,

**"Ahem... I was just wondering... it sounds like we have decided something here. Can we have someone summarize and document this point so we can all be sure what has been decided?"**

Summarize and document, summarize and document. Without documentation of the outcome of your discussion, much of the value of the meeting is lost.

## 4) A Chance For All to Contribute

If one person is dominating the discussion, or there seems to be a general lack of participation, ask,

**"Excuse me ... I'm just really curious ...I would love to hear everyone's opinion on this. Can we start with (name)... and go around the room and have everyone say what they think about this idea or how to make it better?"**

The key to a great meeting is harnessing the energy and experience of the **entire** team. This is a skill some facilitators never learn. Now you can help from the back of the room!

## 5) Summary and Action Plan

If the leader is about to end the meeting without a review, ask,

**"Wow, that was great ... after such a productive meeting, I would hate to leave any loose ends about what we decided or what is going to happen next. Could we take a minute to review the decisions we made, any outstanding issues and the actions that we are going to take once the meeting is over?"**

Reviewing the decisions and agreeing on an action plan are critical steps in a successful meeting. You review the learning and build team cohesiveness in the process.

## Now, You Are Ready For Action

There you have it ... five common ways meetings break down and 5 simple questions that will bring the group back on track.

**You now have the tools to be a skilled Guerrilla Facilitator.** You can make sure every meeting you attend is a productive one even if you aren't the one running it!

Your teammates will thank you afterwards.

**HOT TIP:** Practice the quotes in a mirror out loud a few times before your next meeting to make sure you are comfortable.

Well, off you go and here is a hearty pat on the back – you go out there and save those meetings ... we know you can do it !!!

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Here's to your success in leading meetings from the back of the room,

**Keep breathing and have a great rest of your day,**



### *Dike*

Dike Drummond MD  
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