

Strategies for Setting Group Norms

Four Different Strategies

Written by Myriam Laberge, September, 2010

“How do we want to work together as a group for greatest success?”

Groups that agree on their meeting code of conduct (aka session norms or ground rules), are more productive and achieve better results.

TIP: To facilitate the task of gaining agreement on meeting agreements, you might try one of these facilitation strategies:

- 1. Fast:** For one-time meetings, offer a starting list of possible ground rules, and refine as needed (e.g., respect diverse opinions, start and stop on time, no dumb questions, confidentiality, no side chats, etc.)
- 2. Fully-Owned:** Help a group develop their own norms by asking, “Think of the characteristics of effective meetings? What can we do to support each other in achieving this?”
- 3. Full Participation:** Create a level playing field between participants of different ranks by targeting norms that encourage everyone to leave their ranks at the door.
- 4. Fun:** Invite a team that will work together over time to playfully list the behaviours they don’t want to see (e.g., ever body talks at once; multi-task during the exercises; read materials on the fly...). The desired behaviour will be quite obvious and you may not need to actually formulate any explicit agreements!