



Collaborative tools, services and training

Meet smarter, not harder!

Leadership is the ability to establish standards and manage a creative climate where people are self-motivated toward the mastery of long term constructive goals, in a participatory environment of mutual respect, compatible with personal values.

– Mike Vance

training events coming up

Brisbane

Group Facilitation Methods

9–10 February 2010
Contact: Elaine Richmond
emr@iinet.net.au

Strategic Thinking & Planning

20–21 April 2010
Contact: David Jago
david@smartmeetings.com.au

Understanding & Leading Change

15–16 June 2010
Contact: Elaine Richmond
emr@iinet.net.au

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Staying on track

To stay on track, you need to know where you're going. Sounds obvious doesn't it? Here's a great tool that will help you bring the destination into focus, and keep it there.

Distil all the factors into a common reference point

The **focus question** is pretty much what it sounds like. You use it to focus the attention of the group on the topic. If their attention wanders off, you use that question to bring the focus back into line. The question should:

- Name the **topic** (eg: improving project management practices).
- Identify the **stakeholders** (eg: clients, staff & future users) and **participants** (eg: project leaders, staff & key client representatives).
- Identify the **timeframe** (eg: 6 months).
- Be **open-ended**, so that it initiates the group's creativity and connects with each participant. It's usually a "what" or a "how" question.



Graphic courtesy of Simon Kneebone (the artist) and Institute of Cultural Affairs: Australia.

A well crafted focus question takes account of, and leads directly to, three types of session outcomes:

- **Practical Result.** The kind of tangible product the session needs to achieve. For example: *A set of key learnings from the project/s to date.*
- **Rational Aim:** The kind of thinking and decision-making required for the session to develop that tangible product. For example: *Objective analysis of project achievements/failures.*
- **Experiential Aim:** How people will be different at the end of the session as a result of their working together and their product. For example: *People will feel like they can actually use the learnings, going forward.*

Voilà! Taking all this together, we then have:

What new practise mechanisms must we incorporate across our operations within six months from now?

So, what's your experience of keeping meetings on track? How did you make it happen? Please, go online and post a comment.

Go well!

David

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