

Facilitating for Impact & Outcomes

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U.S. Digital Response

Role / Mission / Approach



29

Core team



500+

states/cities/counties



10,000+

volunteers



30+

active projects

**Shout out to
LifeLabs Learning!**

**& (excruciating)
trial & error**

**LifeLabs⁷
Learning**





Guess?

How many hours per week is the average person in meetings?

15!

Hours & meetings per week

(More for execs, managers, and
project managers)

4 YEARS!!!

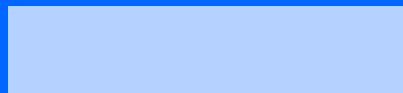
Years of meetings per career

Agenda (~15 mins)

- During: Make statements
- End: Progress + Energy
- Meeting tips



During: Make guiding
statements



Statements

1. Summary statements
2. Time statements
3. Transition statements
4. Observation statements
5. Parking statements

Summary statement

What it is: Meeting facilitator or another participant summarizes what someone just said OR what you've just covered.

Why it's useful:

- Bring people back into the thread of what we're talking about.
- Summarize and simplify participant's comments

Participants talk too much or give long answers

I think it's really important that we get feedback about the new website design. The last time we went through this process, we didn't get any feedback and we had to redo the whole thing. If we don't get feedback, there's a chance that we'll have to redo it all again. I really don't like the idea of having to redo everything again. I just think feedback is so important...

Summary statement

It sounds like feedback is really important to you, and you're concerned we'll need to rework the website again if we don't get feedback. I think that's a great point, and I share that concern. I believe Lee can share more information about the feedback process we have planned.

The conversation jumped to several topics

Summary statement

We just covered a few different things, so I want to make sure we're on the same page. It sounds like Rebecca will email the participants; Lee will facilitate the meeting; and James will upload the recording. It sounds like Ben still had another question about the event. Ben, do you want to talk about that now?

Transition statement

What it is: After a summary statement, explicitly move the conversation on to a new topic or focus.

Why it's useful:

- Creates progress in a meeting
- Keeps current context and goals clear as you move through a meeting

There is low engagement

Transition statement

To summarize, we just talked through the questions everyone had about our holiday party. Next we'll move on to deciding on which venue to host the party. I'll ask each person to give their thoughts. Let's start with Ben.

Time statement

What it is: Describes how much time you will spend on each topic.

Why it's useful:

- Maintains time awareness in a meeting
- Ensures the meeting touches on the most important points

Note:

- Successful time statements are not always about cutting off conversation exactly at the designated time, but to get better at estimating how much time is actually needed for a given topic.

The group spends too much time on each agenda item

Time statement

We have a lot to cover in the next 30 minutes, so we'll spend the first 10 minutes reviewing questions from the document the vendor sent. We'll then have 15 minutes to discuss which plan we want to select, and will use the last 5 minutes to determine next steps. If we need more time to make a decision, I will send out a request for a follow up meeting next week.

Observation statement

What it is: State what you are noticing in a neutral, non-judgmental way.

Why it's useful:

- Directly addresses a point of conflict or confusion in the meeting
- Provides a clear path forward

People are quiet or there is low engagement OR someone is giving very long answers

Observation statement

I'm noticing that we're only getting participation from one or two people. I'd love to hear from a few people who haven't spoken yet.

There is no clear decision maker

Observation statement

It sounds like it's not clear which team is responsible for making this decision. Would it be helpful for us to clarify roles and responsibilities now, or should we pause this conversation for today and reconvene when we've identified the decision-makers?

Parking statement

What it is: Identifying when something is off-topic or not relevant to the group.

Why it's useful:

- Keeps the meeting on-topic

Note:

- Interrupting can seem taboo or rude, but it can be an essential facilitation tool if the conversation is going off-topic.
- It is important to be aware of who gets interrupted the most to check for bias

The group is going off-topic

Observation statement + parking statement

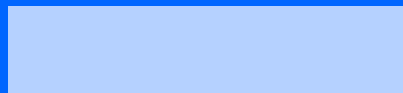
It seems like we're starting to get off-topic here. Let's write down the concerns that are coming up in the parking lot document so we can discuss later. In the meantime, let's refocus on getting to a decision on the budget.

Summary

- 5 statements:
 - Summary statements
 - Time statements
 - Transition statements
 - Observation statements
 - Parking statements
- You can use these statements as a facilitator or participant



End: Progress + Energy



Progress + Energy

Do final summary

Remind what we accomplished.

Capture action items & decisions

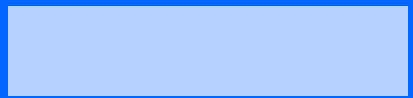
Close loops on commitments.

End with energy

It's the last thing we remember!



Meeting tips





Meeting tips

Update
Share information

Tip: Rotate roles

- facilitator
- note taker
- time keeper

Brainstorm
Generate ideas

Tip: Solo
brainstorm / round
robin

Narrow
Clarity & focus

Tip: Declare
decision making
process

Meeting tips

Pro tip: Have **one** purpose per meeting.

Super pro tip: Notice & course-correct **entangling** of meeting conversation to a different purpose.

Example 1:

At the start: "This meeting is purely for brainstorming. We're not going to get into the nuances of why something would or wouldn't work. This meeting is purely to generate ideas. Next week we'll have a narrowing meeting to get to the specific next steps with what we produce from today's meeting."

Example 2:

During the meeting, someone starts to get into brainstorming during the narrowing meeting. "I'm hearing some interesting new ideas being generated. The purpose of this meeting is to make a final decision and get crisp on next steps. Let's take a vote on whether we're ready to make a final decision, or whether we need to pivot the purpose of this meeting back to generating additional ideas."

Virtual meeting tips

- Set expectations & use virtual tools to guide:
 - communication norms (raise hand, parking lot, camera/mute)
 - facilitator role (interruptions, time sharing)
- Increase engagement:
 - Consider an ice breaker
 - For many participants, try break out rooms or enter into chat waterfall style
 - Round robin, take a poll
 - Share screen to help folks follow along
 - Stop screen share during discussion times
 - Start and end, invite folks to come on camera, unmute and say hello

All we've accomplished

1.

During:
**Make guiding
statements**



2.

End:
**Progress +
Energy**



3.

Meeting tips



Want to get in touch?

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QUESTIONS

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