



"The FoCuSeD™ Facilitator" eNewsletter by Gary Rush, IAF CPF

February 2012

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Facilitation Skills and Teams – Focused Teams

In January, I facilitated a group of healthcare professionals – doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, EMTs, etc. The purpose of the workshop was to identify opportunities and strategies for supporting "inter-professional" teams – teams made up of multiple professions working together for the patient. The workshop went well, and got me thinking of all of the opportunities for multiple professions/disciplines working together as one team and the role that facilitation skills play in making the teams successful.

Some Background

The concept of multiple professions working together is not new. Companies, such as IDEO, have been successfully employing the concept for years. It's spreading beyond the few to become embraced by numerous professions and industries. The concept is not the same as "Self-Directed Work Teams (SDWT)" because these inter-professional teams are convened for a specific purpose – a specific patient in the case of healthcare or a specific design in the case of IDEO. Self-directed work teams are established for a longer period and not limited to a single project. There are similarities because neither has a "leader" and both require a very different way of working than other types of teams. I'll call these "Focused Teams" – defined as, a group of people from multiple professions and/or disciplines, without an obvious "leader", who form, temporarily, for a specific purpose. These Focused Teams require a new set of skills that is seldom taught in the individual professions – facilitation skills.

Why is this growing?

The major impetus that I've seen is the phenomenal growth of information and knowledge required to do many jobs. Twenty years ago, one person could design, build, and deliver a video game. Today, it requires a team of people – musicians, artists, writers, programmers, etc., to make it happen. Fifty years ago, the country doctor carried everything needed to care for a patient in his or her doctor bag. Today, the doctor carries a computer and requires the knowledge of many other professions to care for a patient.

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2012 FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Public Class Dates

5-Day The FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Academy

Jun 04 – 08

Dec 03 – 07

Chicago, IL

4-Day FoCuSeD™ Business Facilitator

Apr 16 – 19

Aug 06 – 09

Chicago, IL

3-Day FoCuSeD™ On...

Mar 19 – 21 San Jose, CA

Sep 10 – 12 Washington, DC

Oct 15 – 17 Austin, TX

2-Day FoCuSeD™ Advanced Class

Sep 25 – 26 Chicago, IL

We can bring our classes on-site anywhere in the world.

Gary Rush, IAF CPF teaches all classes.



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Upcoming Events

- IAF North America Conference
Halifax NS Canada.
May 9 – 12, 2012
- FoCuSeD™ Facilitation Games Pre-Conference Session by Gary Rush, CPF
May 9th.

Facilitation Skills and Teams – Focused Teams, continued

The same is true in many other professions and industries – no one person can be expert enough (an “expert” is defined as a *has-been drop of water*). This increase in required knowledge is due to the increased complexity of our world and requires multiple professions and disciplines to work together.

The Problem

The problem with this growing trend is that the various professions and disciplines are taught all of the technical skills needed to do the job; however, few if any are taught the required *facilitation skills* to work together. And, these professions learn in silos – seldom do they practice working in inter-professional or inter-disciplinary teams in schools – yet they have to work in inter-professional and inter-disciplinary teams when they leave school. Because they don’t learn about teams and working together in their education, they don’t know what the other’s set of skills and perspectives are – and visa versa. Traditional models don’t work because no one expertise is more important than another, so traditional leadership roles don’t exist. Because these “teams” only form for a short time, from a few minutes to a few months, with no one *leader*, traditional “group evolution” – *forming, storming, norming, performing* – happens differently.

How Does it Work?

Even though “group evolution” happens differently, the key characteristics that define a *team* still apply. For a group of people to be a team, they need *trust, healthy conflict, commitment, accountability, and a common goal*. The need for these characteristics doesn’t go away because the teams form for a short time, in fact, these characteristics are more important. The difficulty is to develop these characteristics when no *leader* is responsible to assess and develop the characteristics in the group of people. So how does it work? People need to be trained – both in individual and in inter-professional settings. People need *facilitation skills* and an understanding of *Focused Team concepts*.

- **Different focus on Diversity** – Understanding diversity is critical – especially understanding that diversity, in this instance, is referring to diverse

skills, professions, and perspectives. This different focus is seldom discussed in *diversity training* but is critical to understand. Each profession brings a very different set of skills and perspectives that the others need, but don’t always realize. *One example, I listened to a cardiac surgeon explain that once, when he was in the operating room, he realized that his focus was the mechanics of the heart – making it work correctly. The patient on the table was almost secondary. For the operating room nurse, the focus was on the patient overall.* This different focus brought different perspectives and created communication problems until it was recognized and dealt with.

- **Different way of working** – These *Focused Teams* don’t form accidentally. Since they form on purpose, they need to follow simple project management concepts – plan for the work, execute the work, and then reflect on what happened. Planning for the work enables the team to function well because everyone can then know the purpose and objectives of the team, the roles, and processes they will follow. Executing the work requires facilitation skills. Reflecting on what happened is critical to capture what they learned – both about their work and about how they worked together as a team – so that they continually improve their way of working.
- **New set of skills** – *Focused Teams* need facilitation skills, such as:
 - **Active Listening** – This is critical to working together because communication is important in developing trust, healthy conflict, and commitment. It enables team members to understand each other and not make inaccurate assumptions.
 - **Process thinking** – Knowing how to structure a basic agenda is important. Effective action doesn’t happen when processes are haphazard or poorly defined. A clear process for how a team will work eliminates confusion and miscommunication and gives them a better chance at successfully achieving their goals.
 - **Self-direction** – This is much like *self-directed work teams* in that the individuals need to be self-motivated and self-directed since there is no

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Facilitation Skills and Teams – Focused Teams, continued

“leader” to motivate and direct them. People need to be self-confident enough to be able to self motivate. Additionally, they need to be able to do this without the influence of the ego – they need to view each other as equally important – as equal contributors.

- **Common Competencies** – *The following four competencies are taken from the Core Competencies for Inter-professional Collaborative Practice developed by the Inter-professional Education Collaborative (stakeholders from healthcare professions):*
 - **Values/Ethics** – A set of core values that everyone in the team accepts and follows ensures that every member is on a common playing field. Mutual respect, trust, and honesty help a team develop trust and engage in healthy conflict.
 - **Roles/Responsibilities** – Knowing who does what helps avoid communication errors and helps avoid people stepping on someone else’s responsibility. Often, just defining roles and responsibilities is the easiest way to ensure success of an effort.

- **Communication** – Active listening and understanding another’s perspective clears the way for accurate communication, which avoids errors and discord.
- **Teamwork** – Working as a team and knowing how to work as a team – listening, understanding processes, knowing how to correct dysfunction – all help prevent discord in the team and helps them develop commitment, accountability and aim for a common goal.

This is the Future

Our world isn’t getting simpler so the need for *Focused Teams* will continue growing. These new types of teams need to be recognized and developed. I will explore this topic further in future newsletters as new ideas develop. *Focused Teams* require changing how we train people and require that we train people on facilitation skills as well as the technical skills of their job. 

FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Classes

“Stop looking for solutions – when you’re FoCuSeD™, you find them.”

The FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Academy

PMI – R.E.P.
IIBA – E.E.P.

Gary Rush’s 5-day highly interactive class teaches “**how to**” with an understanding of the “**why**” to perform as an effective Facilitator. It guides you, enabling you to plan the emotional group cycle along with the workshop process to build a product – **Holistic Facilitation**. This class covers situations encompassing all of the topics covered in all of the FoCuSeD™ classes, plus IT situations. It covers effective Facilitator Skills and tools necessary to facilitate *any situation in business and in life*. It is the most complete, most comprehensive, and most effective facilitation class available providing detailed training on the concepts of *Holistic Facilitation*. This class is ideal for all people. It helps build your professional skills and confidence. It develops Collaborative Leaders. With FoCuSeD™ you get JAD, FAST, and more. [Read more...](#)

This 5-day highly interactive class covers situations encompassing all of the topics covered in all of our FoCuSeD™ classes plus IT situations.

“Best session I’ve had in 30+ years of classes!”

Michael, Project Manager & Facilitator (The FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Academy alumnus)

FoCuSeD™ Facilitator Classes

“Stop looking for solutions – when you’re FoCuSeD™, you find them.”

FoCuSeD™ Business Facilitator

PMI – R.E.P.

Gary Rush’s 4-day highly interactive class teaches “**how to**” with an understanding of the “**why**” to perform as an effective Facilitator. It guides you, enabling you to plan the emotional group cycle along with the workshop process to build a product – **Holistic Facilitation**. This class covers People Skills, basic Process Design, Strategic Planning, and Problem Solving. It covers effective Facilitator Skills and tools necessary to facilitate *business situations from Strategic Planning, to Six Sigma, CMMI, to Problem-Solving*. This class is ideal for HR Professionals, strategic planners, and others who will facilitate planning and a variety of business situations. It helps build your professional skills and confidence. It develops Collaborative Leaders. [Read more...](#)

This 4-day highly interactive class covers People Skills, basic Process Design, Strategic Planning, and Problem Solving.

FoCuSeD™ On...

PMI – R.E.P.

IIBA – E.E.P.

Gary Rush’s 3-day highly interactive class teaches “**how to**” with an understanding of the “**why**” to perform as an effective Facilitator. It guides you, enabling you to plan the emotional group cycle along with the workshop process to build a product – **Holistic Facilitation**. This class covers People Skills and basic Process Design. It covers effective Facilitator Skills and tools necessary to facilitate *the overall business management strategy into the product solutions so needed for business success – achieving support and commitment from their stakeholders*. This class is ideal for Project Managers, Quality Analysts, and others working in Project Management, Six Sigma, TQM, and other quality initiatives. It helps build your professional skills and confidence. It develops Collaborative Leaders. [Read more...](#)

This 3-day highly interactive class covers People Skills and basic Process Design.

A New Book

FoCuSeD™ Facilitation Games by Gary Rush, IAF CPF

This new book from Gary Rush, IAF CPF covers how to conduct group facilitation exercises – *Participant Engagement Tools (PETs)* – effectively; how to incorporate concepts, such as the *Ziegarnik Effect* and *Gamification*; and how to design your own *PETs*. Included are over 50 PETs covering Get Participants to Know Each Other, Generate Ideas, Challenge Paradigms and Be Creative, Make Decisions, Understand Someone Else, Managing Focus and Perspective, and Managing Norms along with guidance on when to use each PET and how to modify each one for Participants, specific workshops, and teleconferences. *What people are saying...* [Read more...](#)

This book is available from MGR Consulting, Inc. Contact [Gary](#) to purchase a book.

About MGR Consulting, Inc.

MGR Consulting, Inc. has been in business since 1985. We are a recognized leader in the field of Facilitation and Facilitator Training. Our **FoCuSeD™** Facilitator classes support the *International Association of Facilitators (IAF) Core Facilitator Competencies* and what students need to do to achieve them, enabling those people who wish to pursue their *IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF)* designation. **Note:** *You can only receive Professional Facilitator Certification from the International Association of Facilitators (IAF).* [Read more...](#)

What Makes Us Different?

Our Leadership

Gary Rush, IAF CPF, Founder and President of **MGR Consulting, Inc.**, attended the U.S. Naval Academy. He is amongst the most successful and influential Facilitator Trainers in the world. *As a Facilitator trainer*, he teaches specific “how to” with an understanding of “why” to perform as an effective Facilitator; he provides detailed Facilitator and process tools and, as an IAF CPF Assessor, he covers the *IAF Core Facilitator Competencies*. *As a Facilitator*, he improves client business performance through effective application of exceptional facilitation processes. He is highly skilled at engaging Participants and guiding them to consensus. [Read more...](#)

Our Training

Until **FoCuSeD™**, facilitation techniques have been either about structure or group dynamics. **FoCuSeD™** contains a unique concept for developing workshop agendas with an understanding of the two *parallel developments* occurring: “the workshop process and emotional group cycle”, that must be holistically planned to achieve useful solutions. *This is the essence of FoCuSeD™.* [Read more...](#)

[Contact Gary](#) directly at +1 773-330-2064 • email at grush@mgrconsulting.com

For additional information, see our Website – www.mgrconsulting.com