

MPS-29 Chairperson skills

Donald R Woods, McMaster University, Hamilton

CANADA

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Every meeting must have a chairperson who facilitates the process to maintain good team/group morale and to get the task done.

MPS 29 Chairperson skills Target behaviors

Evidence-based targets for being a chairperson. Although some general principles have been reported that relate to chairing meetings, most of the target skills are based on best practices as recommended by researchers.

Evidence-based targets	Progress toward internalizing these targets				
	20%	40%	60%	80%	100%
Groups/teams function better if there is a designated chair					
The chair has responsibility of preparing an agenda, circulating it ahead of the meeting (so that all know the goals of the meeting) or creating one soon after the group forms (if the chair could not prepare one ahead of time because, for example he/she was just appointed to be chair when the meeting started). The agenda should indicate about the amount of time allowed for each agenda item.					
The chair's responsibility is to start the meeting on time and finish the meeting on time.					
The chair monitors the TASK and MORALE components of the meeting and intervenes as needed					
For skilled and experienced groups about 15% of the time is spent on MORALE activities; 15% on TASK process activities and about 70% of the time getting the task done. For inexperienced groups, more time is spent on MORALE and TASK process issues.					
Use Sanderson's 20 minute rule; after 20 min of discussion on any one topic decide: 1) what is the decision or 2) what additional information is needed to make a decision.					

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Chairperson skills: facilitation skills used so that a group applies problem solving and interpersonal skills to efficiently and effectively complete a task & develop good morale among the group members.

Skill development:

1. Learn the characteristics of groups and the role of the chairperson to facilitate group evolution to a team.
2. Realize that each person has a unique contribution to the group process; that contribution should be encouraged, nurtured and used to the advantage of the group. The chairperson is to facilitate this encouragement, and nurturing.
3. Learn how to give and receive feedback .
4. Recognize that trust is the most valued element in relationships and be able to list those behaviours that build trust and those that destroy it .
5. Acquire some skill at listening
6. Acquire some skill in assessment
7. Realize that both morale and task are important
8. Accept that chairperson is not leadership. Leadership varies from person to person depending on the task.
9. Accept that if a group is faltering, process skills are needed. Gradually you will develop skill in facilitating the group process.
10. Through self awareness, begin to improve self confidence
11. Begin to develop an environment of trust where risking is OK.
12. Group skills are the first step toward developing team skills
13. Be able to identify the different elements that make up "group norms" and recognize the importance of discussing these early in the group process.

Pretest:

Chairperson skills how aware are you of what you do as chairperson of a group? Rate with an "x"

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Unaware				Aware of					Very aware	
I just				Some					I can describe	
do it									The details of	
									how I do it	

Skill: how skilled are you as chairperson? Rate with an "x"

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Poor		Fair		Good		Very good			Excellent	

Comments:

MPS 29 Chairperson skills

1.1 Given a term listed under "concepts introduced", you should be able to give a word definition, list pertinent characteristics and cite an example.

5.1 Given that a chairperson is assigned to the group and that, for growth, the chairperson will receive feedback from every group member at the end of each meeting, all will have practice completing form **2901 (Feedback to chairperson)** such that there will be no more than 1.8 scale variations on the rating of Task and of Morale among all the raters and the Total ratings (about the role of the chairperson) will not deviate by more than 10 among all raters. The ratings will also agree with those of a trained outside assessor.

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6.1 Given a group, you will facilitate a **norms** meeting so that the group unanimously decides on the typical 17 issues related to group process. These range from *the role of the chairperson* to *procedure for asking a person to leave the group*.

6.2 Given a group and a decision that has to be made (and perhaps the process to be used to make the decision, eg, vote, consensus, unanimity, nominal group), and given the feedback from form **2901** from all the participants, you will be able to objectively summarize the findings, extract a description of the role you played, contrast the descriptors the members give you with the ones you wrote in the pretest and write out an action plan to help you improve. Your analysis of the evidence should agree within 80% of that of the tutor.

6.3 Concerning the assessment of the group and of the chairperson using form **2901**, given the same group functioning under different chairpersons at different times and with different tasks, as a group you will consistently rate the group's performance on Task and Morale and consistently discriminate between the group's inherent ability and the chairperson's contribution to the group. The consistency will be within 1.8 units on the 7 point scale used on form **2901**.

6.4 Concerning improvement, given the assessment in #6.2, and given other opportunities to be chairperson, you will convert at least one of your "Areas to work on" into a "strength".

6.5 Given that you are to chair a meeting and given the purpose, you will prepare an agenda and circulate it to all attendees at least 48 hours ahead of the meeting. The agenda shall include names, time and place of the meeting, purpose, prework that is expected of all participants, a list of materials and information to bring to the meeting, a list of the topics to be addressed at the meeting and the time allocated for each item. An outside observer or tutor should assess the agenda as being 100% complete.

6.6 Given that you are to chair a meeting and given the purpose, you will prepare an agenda, devise ahead of time whatever materials you feel need to be brought to the meeting, circulate (at least 48 hours in advance) the agenda to all interested parties, run the meeting and complete 60% of the agenda in the time available and receive better than average ratings on both task and morale for the conduct of the meeting and receive a total rating on task (the sum of the totals from all group members on chairperson feedback form) > 30 and > 30 on morale.

6.7 As in #6.6, but complete 80% of the agenda and receive total ratings for each Task and Morale of >100

6.8 As in #6.6, but complete 100% of the agenda and receive total ratings for each Task and Morale of > 300.

Concepts introduced

Agenda, norms meeting, feedback form **2901**, chairperson, leader, Task, Morale, Sanderson's 20 minute rule, vote, unanimity, nominal group, consensus.

Rules of thumb about the people part of engineering: People skills

Nine suggestions are given.

1. Become aware of your own uniqueness and personal style, and how you might differ from the style of others
2. Honor the seven fundamental rights of individuals, RIGHTS. **R**, to be Respected; **I**, Inform or to have an opinion and express it; **G**, have Goals and needs; **H**, have feelings and express them; **T**, trouble and make mistakes and be forgiven, **S**, select your response to the expectations of others and claim these rights and honor these in others.
3. Avoid the four behaviors that destroy relationships: Contempt, Criticism, Defensiveness and Withdrawal/ stonewalling
4. Trust is the glue that holds relationships together.
5. Build trust by *keeping* commitments to yourself and others; *clarifying* expectations that you have of yourself and of others; *showing* personal integrity, honesty and loyalty to others, especially when they are not present; *apologizing* promptly and sincerely when you know you are wrong; *honoring* the fundamental RIGHTS listed above and avoiding the destroyers (listed above in #3); *listening and understanding* another's perspective; *being truthful*; and *accepting others* "warts and all".
6. Destroy trust by the reverse of the Builders of trust listed above, and by selectively listening, reading and using material out of context; not accepting experience of others as being valid; making changes that affect others without consultation; blind-siding by playing the broken record until you've eventually worn them out or subtly make changes in the context/issues/wording gradually so that they are unaware of what is happening until it is too late.
7. The *12: 1 rule* applies to rebuild relationships. 12 positive experiences are needed to overcome 1 negative experience.
8. To improve and grow we need feedback about performance. Give feedback to others to encourage and help them; not for you to get your kicks and put them down. Focus on five strengths for every two areas to improve on.
9. Be skilled at responding assertively. "*When you... I feel .. adjust by...*"

1.20 Rules of thumb about the people part of engineering: Team and group skills

A team is **more than** a collection of individuals. In a collection of individuals each has a personal goal, trusts self, rarely exposes personal skills, decisions are usually not made and conflict is ignored. In a team, all unanimously accept the goals, each is clear about role, trust and involvement are high, personal unique skills are used effectively, decisions are made by unanimity and the team has methods for handling conflict. Our meetings and teamwork improve when we strive for the characteristics of teams.

Some target behaviors of teams are:

1. Have a purpose for each team and each meeting. Set and follow agendas to get the task done.
2. No agenda; no meeting! If a meeting must be held without a circulated agenda, then spent the first 5 minutes creating the agenda.
3. The team must have the correct membership and resources to achieve the goal.
4. The team should be empowered and accountable to achieve the goal.
5. Both Task (getting the job done) and Morale (feeling good about the group work and about how you have interacted with the other group members) are important.
6. Have a chairperson whose role is to facilitate the team process: thinks through the tasks to be done, decides on the need for a team meeting, identifies the time and place for the meeting, sets and circulates an agenda, facilitates the meeting and start and stops the meeting on time.
7. Chairperson and leadership are different; different people may become leaders at different times.
8. Group evolution tends to follow a pattern described as by such descriptors as "*forming, storming, norming and performing*".
8. Establish group norms of behavior early. Agree on terminology and procedures for problem solving, for brainstorming, for decision-making, the role of the chair in decision making, *for example, vote or no vote*; roles, minutes and records of decisions, *for example, format, details, who prepares them, are they circulated? use for subsequent meetings*; how to handle conflict and level of intervention; combating "group think"; how to handle emergencies and criteria and procedures for asking a member of the group to resign.
9. Each has a clear idea of roles and of group norms.
10. When groups are functioning effectively, about 70% of the time is spent on the task; 15% on morale building activities and 15% of task process activities.
11. The products from groups or teams are improved when members have different "styles".
12. The quality of decisions, product, task is improved if group members offer different perspectives, disagree and seem to introduce conflict into the process. The trick is to manage the apparent conflict well.
13. Use Sanderson's 20 minute rule. After 20 minutes either make a decision or identify the key information that is missing and arrange to obtain that information for the next meeting.
14. Document decisions and record **Actions** with "what", "who" and "when". *Example*: "Decide to compare two optional control strategies" **Action**: JBM by March 30.
15. Systematically assess the quality of the teamwork and set goals for improvement. Table 1-4 is an example form for such an assessment.

● **Trouble shooting:**

a. Trouble shooting teams

Use Table 1-4 after each meeting, set goals and celebrate achievement. Use the framework developed by Francis and Young (1979) for growth; consult Fisher et al. (1995) for more short-term ideas.

b. Trouble shooting team meetings:

These are organized by symptom with possible corrective responses suggested for chair {C} and member {M}.

1. Problems with purpose and chairperson.

"*No apparent purpose for the meeting*": {C} don't have a meeting. {M} question the purpose of the meeting. See also Agenda and timing problems.

2. Agenda and timing problems:

"*No agenda*": {M}: phone {C} and ask for agenda. Invoke "no agenda, not attendance."/at meeting: "Perhaps the first thing we should do is to create an agenda." / After 5 minutes, "We seem to be lost. Could we draw up an agenda and follow that?"

29-4

"Meeting drags on and on": {C} should have circulated an agenda with times for each item and used the 20 minute rule/ {M} "Perhaps we can follow the agenda."/ {M} indicate to {C} ahead of time the amount of time you have available for the meeting and then leave at that time.

"Get off the track": {M} seek direction, purpose, summary of progress: "Now where are we?" "Would someone want to summarize what we have done so far?" "Let's check on the purpose of this meeting and see our progress." / see also Behavior problems: *"Subgroups interrupting and talking"*.

"Group gets bogged down": state problem/ summarize/seek agenda clarification/ invoke 20 min rule.

"Decisions made just at the end of the meeting": state frustration/ suggest tabling/ suggest future corrective way to handle. See also Agenda and chairperson problems.

3. Behavior and participation problems

"People come into a meeting cold:" {C or M} suggest reconvene meeting when all are prepared.

"Late arrivals": {C} start meeting on time and continue with the agenda through the disruption of the retardee/ {M} "I realize that not everyone is here but I suggest that we start. It looks like a long agenda to get through."

"Some people do all the talking and some remain silent": wrong membership/ encourage quiet ones to contribute/ ask each, in turn, to summarize his/her point of view/ ask a "safe" question of the silent ones/ privately check with the silent ones and reevaluate whether they need to attend./ ask open ended questions/ use nominal group.

"Sub groups interrupting and talking": identify problem/ suggest discussing one issue at a time and add subgroup's issues to agenda/ be silent until the side conversation stops. "Thank you." / Interrupt the side conversation.

"Indecisive members, continual question asker": ask for their ideas early/ redirect questions he/she asks back to him/her.

4. Conflict or apparent conflict

"Conflict because of differing views:" restate the importance and value of everyone's opinions/ attempt to bring conflict into the open/ summarize different views/ focus on different performance or opinions and not personalities/ remind of fundamental RIGHTS.

"Conflict over facts:" stop the argument, identify problem as you see it and check that that is a problem/ identify facts we need clarified and probable expert.

"Conflict over values, goals, criteria, process or norms:" stop discussion, identify problem as you see it and check that that is a problem/ use problem solving.

"Resistance to new ideas, we tried that before, it won't work, over my dead body, we don't have the resources": surface the resistance/ honor the resistance/ invoke consequence of no decision or of repeating what we've always done before/ use consensus building techniques/ reflect on the home turf of the objector and the impact the decision might have on them; explore if this might be brought to the group as an issue to address/ root cause of most resistance is fear of change, apathy, vested interests, not invented here, negativism, overwhelmed by the enormity of proposal.

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Table 1-4

Purpose of meeting: _____ Date of meeting: _____
 Chairperson: _____ Agenda circulated ahead of time, yes
 Meeting started on time, yes ; Meeting ended on time, yes
 start delayed _____ min.

● As a group, by consensus, agree on a rating for Task and Morale.

Task: Problem defined, many issues and hypotheses explored, criteria listed and the issues prioritized. Refrained from early closure. Task carried out and looked back at the result to assess it. Group agreement as to goals. Process was active with monitoring. Completed task on time. The accuracy in the group's answer matched the time available. Group avoided contributing excessive information.

None of these behaviours	2	3	4	5	6	7

Morale: Group relaxed; enjoyed working together. They gave emotional support to each other and were able to express disagreement or disappointment directly. Seven fundamental rights preserved. Members are enthusiastic and involved.

None of these behaviours	2	3	4	5	6	7

Individual Contribution to Task and Morale: Each, in turn, takes 30 seconds to describe his/her contribution to the group. This is not for discussion.

As a group, by consensus, list the five strengths and the two areas to work on.

Group Strengths

Group Areas to work on

29-6

Table 29-1: Date of meeting: _____ Group: _____ Chairperson: _____

Agenda circulated ahead of time, yes no ; start on time, yes , no ;. end on time, yes , no

Task: Problem defined, many issues and hypotheses explored, criteria listed and the issues prioritized. Refrained from early closure. Task carried out and looked back at the result to assess it. Group agreement as to goals. Process was active with monitoring. Completed task on time. The accuracy in the group's answer matched the time available. Group avoided contributing excessive information.

None Few but Most features All of these
major omissions demonstrated behaviours

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total	Agenda: Names, time, place, purpose, prework, bring, topics, timing		Use of agenda: Keep on topic, effectively & not disruptively keep on time, 20 min rule		Facilitation as needed when team functioning below norms on Task	
15 to 20	Excellent & ahead of time		Used very well		Mega positive: clarified, brought back on task, monitored Task	
10 to 14	Poor & ahead of time		OK		Some positive as needed: clarified, back on task, monitored Task	
5 to 9	Excellent but handed out at start	Fair			Neutral because working well	
0 to 4	Poor and handed out at start					
0 to -4	Excellent created at start	Poorly			Neutral when help was needed or unskilled and unable to help	
-5 to -9	Poor created at start					
-10 to -15	No agenda		Not used		Kept dominating as leader, when facilitator need, Solved problem for group, when they didn't want that solution	
-16 to -20					Mega negative, imposed own ideas and answers. Dictator	

Morale: Group relaxed; enjoyed working together. They gave emotional support to each other and were able to express disagreement or disappointment directly. Seven fundamental rights preserved. Members are enthusiastic and involved.

None Few but Most features All of these
major omissions demonstrated behaviours

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Total	Agenda:		Use of agenda:		Facilitation as needed when team functioning below norms on Morale	
15 to 20	Excellent & ahead of time		Used very well. Comfort high because know goals		Skilled observer of interpersonal process, praiser, facilitates, conflict resolution and provides tension relief as needed.	
10 to 14	circulated ahead but missing prework & bring		Comfort moderate, can infer what to do ahead of time		Some skill and intervention	
0 to 9			Fair		No intervention because all working well	
-1 to -9	Some frustration; feel ill-prepared because didn't know what to prework or bring		Poor		No intervention when help was needed or unskilled in facilitation	
-10 to -15	No agenda, High distress		Not used, high distress because unclear as to where going		Some, causes lower-than-norm morale because of criticism, defensiveness, contemptuousness, stubborn, conflict	
-16 to -20					Mega causes tension, seeks personal goals, critical, abusive, self centered and defensive, contemptuous, ignores others	

Personal Satisfaction with decisions made: 0 = extremely dissatisfied...5 = OK..... 10 = very satisfied

Strengths

Areas to work on

