



Managing Power Relationships in Facilitation

Stephen Davies, CMC
Chris Carter, CMC

December 13, 2023 12:30 p.m. ET



A HIGHER LEVEL of
management consulting
ONTARIO



Un NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR
de conseil en management
ONTARIO





WHAT'S UP NEXT

The 2nd Wednesday of the month
12:30pm eastern

Visit CMC-Canada for a list of all
Canada events

<https://www.cmc-canada.ca/Events>



ONTARIO

What's Up Wednesday

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN 2024 AND BEYOND

Speaker :

Ashley Brown

Senior Digital Marketing Consultant

January 10, 2024 | 12:30-1:30pm

Registration
Open





AWARDS *Night*

CMC Ontario Annual Awards
Celebration 2024

- ✓ Ottawa | January 25th
- ✓ Toronto | January 30th

Visit CMC-Canada for a list of all
Canada events

<https://www.cmc-canada.ca/Events>



CMC-ONTARIO AWARDS *Night*

Join us in January,
2024 for an evening of
celebration of member
achievements, awards,
and community
engagement.

- 2 LOCATIONS
- 2 EVENTS
- 2 DATES



Learn more



BECOME A PRO BONO *Client*

Are you with a charitable organization in Ontario?

- The CMC Pro Bono program empowers small, established charities to achieve their goals by providing volunteer CMC Management Consultants at no cost.

Learn more, find out if you are eligible and apply today!

<https://cmc-canada.ca/Ontario/Ontario-Pro-bono-client-program>

Certified Management Consultant Volunteers are welcome to apply here

<https://www.cmc-canada.ca/Ontario/Ontario-Pro-bono-program>

Become a

PRO BONO *Client*

Are you with
a charitable
organization in
Ontario?



You may be eligible to receive
free support from a Certified
Management Consultant.



WHY JOIN?

MEMBERSHIP CONNECTS YOU



CONSULTANTS



NETWORK



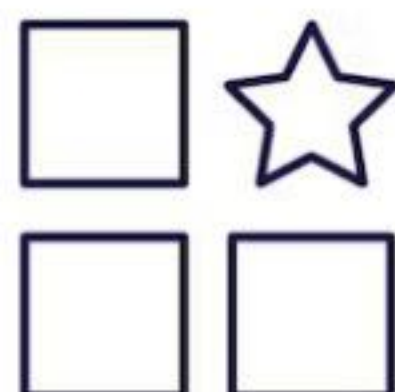
RESOURCES



CERTIFICATION



VISIBILITY



DIFFERENTIATE





Stephen Davies, CMC



Christopher Carter, CMC

Your facilitators today



How to Participate

- You will be muted for this call
- We're using Mentimeter today
- Submit questions using the the Q+A icon
- Use Zoom chat if you're having issues
- We kindly ask that you turn your Video on if you are able to. We want to see your smiling faces!
- This session will be recorded
- A copy of the presentation will be available after the event.



Warm-Up Exercise: What is your favourite winter activity?

38 responses

A word cloud of 38 responses to the question 'What is your favourite winter activity?'. The words are arranged in a central cluster, with 'skiing' and 'hockey' being the largest. Other prominent words include 'walking', 'snowshoeing', 'skating', 'reading', 'fireplace', 'golf', 'complaining', 'running', 'coffee and baileys', 'walking in forest', 'downhill skiing', 'getting outdoors', 'snowshoeing in woods', 'family and friends', 'seeing friends', 'forest bathing', 'cookies', 'cross country skiing', 'staying warm', 'biking', 'drinking', 'indoor yoga', 'cuddling', 'hiking', 'reading by the fire', 'sleeping', and 'reading'. The words are in various colors, including orange, brown, and grey.

snowshoeing in woods
family and friends
seeing friends
sleeping forest bathing cookies
reading by the fire walking
fireplace golf skiing
complaining
reading running hockey
coffee and baileys skating
walking in forest snowshoeing
downhill skiing cuddling
getting outdoors indoor yoga
hiking
cross country skiing
staying warm
drinking biking

Our purpose today

- To enable CMCs to improve their practices in managing power relationships in the sessions they facilitate.
- To elicit the audience's knowledge of power relationships, correlating it with the principles and practices that we use as experienced facilitators

< Exercise #1: How would you describe power relationships in organizations you work with?

Influence

15 responses



Degree of influence

Positional power,
influence

Who can say yes, who can
say no, who influences

Silent influencers

Commitment

Controlling

Imbalance

Imbalance

Applying equity lens

Ensuring an inclusive
cross section of
stakeholders

Who is in the room

Misunderstood

Length of service among
the team

inability to see others

< Exercise #1: How would you describe power relationships in organizations you work with?

Hierarchy

12 responses



Hierarchy

hierarchy

Hierarchial

Connections

Many are top down
Hierarchical

Hierarchical. Years of
experience.

complex

politely hiarchical

Visible, Hidden

us and them

Matrix always - explicit or
implicit

Drivers, Watchers,
Ambush

Join at menti.com | use code 2847 6389



< Exercise #1: How would you describe power relationships in organizations you work with?

Power dynamics

9 responses



Interesting nuance in French between puissance (power over) and pouvoir (power through).

Positional power Hidden agendas P

hidden agendas exercise of desire for personal power

Passive aggressiveness

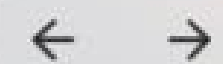
control issues

snap decisions

Generational differences

Gender and formal roles

Revenue generating



< Exercise #1: How would you describe power relationships in organizations you work with?

● Organizational politics

6 responses



political influences

Hierarchy of the organization influences the conversation

History of the organization, legacy relationships

Agendas

collegial

understand everyone's agenda

Join at menti.com | use code 2847 6389



< Exercise #1: How would you describe power relationships in organizations you work with?

■ Communication dynamics

6 responses



strained communications

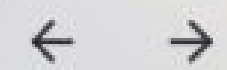
Social intelligence

flow of information and
input upward

Information holders

Process for the session

Core business vs support





Mary Parker Follett – On Power (1868 – 1933)

- Power is “simply the ability to make things happen, to be a causal agent, to initiate change”
- Distinguished power-over and power-with
- Power-over is coercion, power-with is coactive

Exercise #2: When designing a session for a client, what aspects of power do you consider?

helping junior people speak up in the presence of senior people

Will the boss be in the room?

who is in the room

Organizational culture

How many people will be there

room layout to "level" the power

Ability to make decisions and take action

Role of attendees

Exercise #2: When designing a session for a client, what aspects of power do you consider?

Are there strong personalities?

interviews pre-meeting

silent writing

Generally do not include managers with workers in focus groups

Who will be the "me too" and simply follow the leader

Equity lens

Who is the decision maker?
Who are the influencers? How to ensure everyone is heard?

inclusion of divergent viewpoints, ensure interdisciplinary representation

Exercise #2: When designing a session for a client, what aspects of power do you consider?

Using inclusive frameworks to stakeholder choice

understand potential hidden agendas

Using co-creation approaches

Organizational Hierarchy

Group behavior

Understand the different approaches of those who are extroverts vs introverts and ensure both types are heard

Timing

giving the quieter people time to think through their responses to posed questions (so the talkers don't dominate)

Exercise #2: When designing a session for a client, what aspects of power do you consider?

Role for experts in the group

identify nay sayers vs real SMEs

Who can say yes, who can say no, influencers

Pre work

Using structured dialogue approaches to level power out

In person vs online

Straw models for interviews and workshops

remember, the servant of all is the master of all

Exercise #2: When designing a session for a client, what aspects of power do you consider?

Zoom definitely partially levels the playing field.

Well thought out advance materials that are not overwhelming in order to prepare participants

The fun part is really important - people take in more information when they are happy and laughing



Influence	High	Ensure stakeholder remains satisfied.	Work closely with stakeholder to ensure that they are in agreement with and support the change.
	Low	Monitor to ensure stakeholders interest or influence do not change.	Keep informed; stakeholder is likely to be very concerned and may feel anxious about lack of control.
		Low	High

Impact

WHAT WE MEAN BY "SYSTEMIC CHANGE"

Myrons Maxims

- People own what they help create
- Real change happens in real work
- Those who do the work do the change
- Start anywhere, follow it everywhere
- Connect the system to more of itself

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

good participation

Outcome-based

Start with the end in mind

upfront "data" collection
through interviews

participants feel valued

fits in schedule

No surprises for
participants and the client

participation is well
received

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

hear from all participants

need all the key players,
clear goals and objectives

Know what the objective is,
expected outcomes

Focused Exercises with a
purpose that bridge to the
next level of discussion

Participants see value

People talking early

clear parameters

people respect each
others views

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

Space for debrief in the agenda

Initial engagement and understanding of the client.

Understood by those executing process AND also those who are peripheral.

The process should be well-documented and consistent.

Consider your audience

Considers all perspectives and opinions

Preparation to achieve objectives
Pre-work for participants and ensure key people are available

ensure participation of whoever needs to be heard

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

Principles of design thinking:
empathy, clarity on problem to
be solved...

gathering broader info through
surveys to give participants
meat to chew on

notes are captured

participants feel free to
speak up

Delivers on objectives and
goals.

Preparation on behalf of
the facilitator

Alignment with the
problem you're trying to
solve

thought through end to end -
considers participants,
culturespace to pivot

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

pre-session online workshops to help set expectations

Co-creating the process and outcomes with partners

making a plan makes us familiar with the issues, the plan will change as soon as we start

Clarity on outcomes (and outputs)

How each activity is intended to land and a clear purpose for all activities

Allows for substitution of people or technology without necessary redesign.

Psychological safety is paramount

Check-ins with client and be open to redesign on fly

What are the key characteristics of a well-designed process?

Clear objectives, expectations and outcomes

Respects schedule and time

Think of flexibility

Use storytelling to send the right message

Questions we ask ourselves:

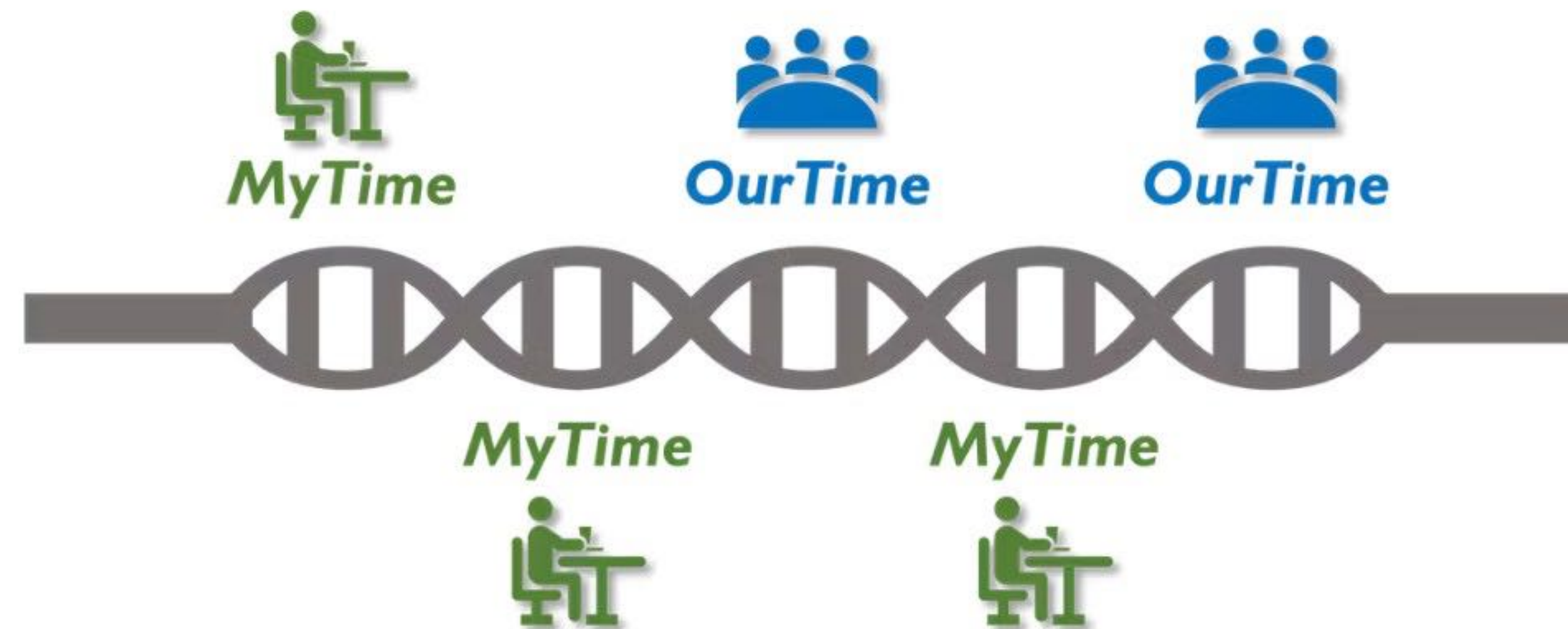
- Is it a fair process? Does it follow the fair process principles?
- Are all the essential voices in the room? Which system stakeholders are missing?
- How is the conversation framed? From whose perspective or privilege? Is there a bias in terms of who is being centred in the process?
- How does the session balance aural, visual, and kinesthetic modalities?
- How does the session align with basic human biological needs?
- How does the session balance the injection of new knowledge with the time to absorb, process, and reflect on it?
- What decision-making process will be used and to what extent do participants understand that process?
- How does in-person versus virtual impact outcomes?



Good design remains a pre-requisite to a good process ...



... while digital allows new ways of working as a group



What are the key characteristics of a well-facilitated process?

well paced

Equitable and inclusive engagement of all

Safe environment

Clear communication including strong listening skills

Addresses the problem

Capture the words & meanings of participants

Finished on time/not rushed at the end

good summary of points raised

What are the key characteristics of a well-facilitated process?

High engagement and participation

Not rushed

Responsive in the moment

stays on topic

Fun/engaging

...and yet flexible to pivot to address emerging thinking

Establish comfort with the audience at the onset.

People feel heard and validated

What are the key characteristics of a well-facilitated process?

Participants can see build to end point - makes sense to them

Fun!

Don't be afraid to smile and laugh

Move conversation along without ignoring groups needs

Clarity of where 'we' are at any point in the process

being open to adjust the process in the moment

Allow people to think and absorb

Sense of what happens next

What are the key characteristics of a well-facilitated process?

Doesn't move at the pace of the "boss"

Founded in adult learning principles

Clear objectives, expectations and outcomes

Fun is so important - people are more engaged and take in information better when they are laughing

difficult issues aired

Use storytelling to send the right message

More questions to think about:

- Have the participants generate their ideas with respect to the key characteristics of a well-facilitated process?
- Did the facilitator introduce themselves and describe their purpose, role, and empowerment?
- Did the facilitator explain to the participants how they can adjust the facilitation style?
- Was the purpose of the session clear? Were the desired outcomes clear?
- Was the decision-making approach and rules agreed?
- What is used to open the session and set the tone? How do you close with grace?
- What rules and guidelines are established from the outset?
- What do we mean by creating a container? Safe space vs. Brave space



What might you do differently for your next facilitated session?

Hire a CMC

Look into concept of
"brave space"

Add fun :)

Figure out how to use
menti.com

Remain flexible

Be more flexible in terms of
the schedule

Reflect on Myrons Maxims

Be more intentional in ensuring
a more diverse and inclusive
engagement

What might you do differently for your next facilitated session?

Think more into the equity lens and psychological safety in facilitating group sessions

Make fewer assumptions about the purpose behind the engagement. Ensure there is a common understanding within the group at the onset.

Not being tied to the "agenda"

Smile more

Flexibility

Recognize power issues as they arise

Pre-meet with as many participants as possible

Learn how to mute the boss to ensure that everyone has a voice

What might you do differently for your next facilitated session?

Up front work with leader/sponsors to call out potential influences of their power

Remember the forest for the trees

Step back when a group is functional/functioning – help participants become independent learners; take control of their discussion and learning.

Delete button?

Address potential power issues before the session

Be mindful about balancing personalities and agendas (especially the boss in the room)

Go with the flow

Be brave to Sal away if it's obvious power will undermine the process

What might you do differently for your next facilitated session?

To walk away

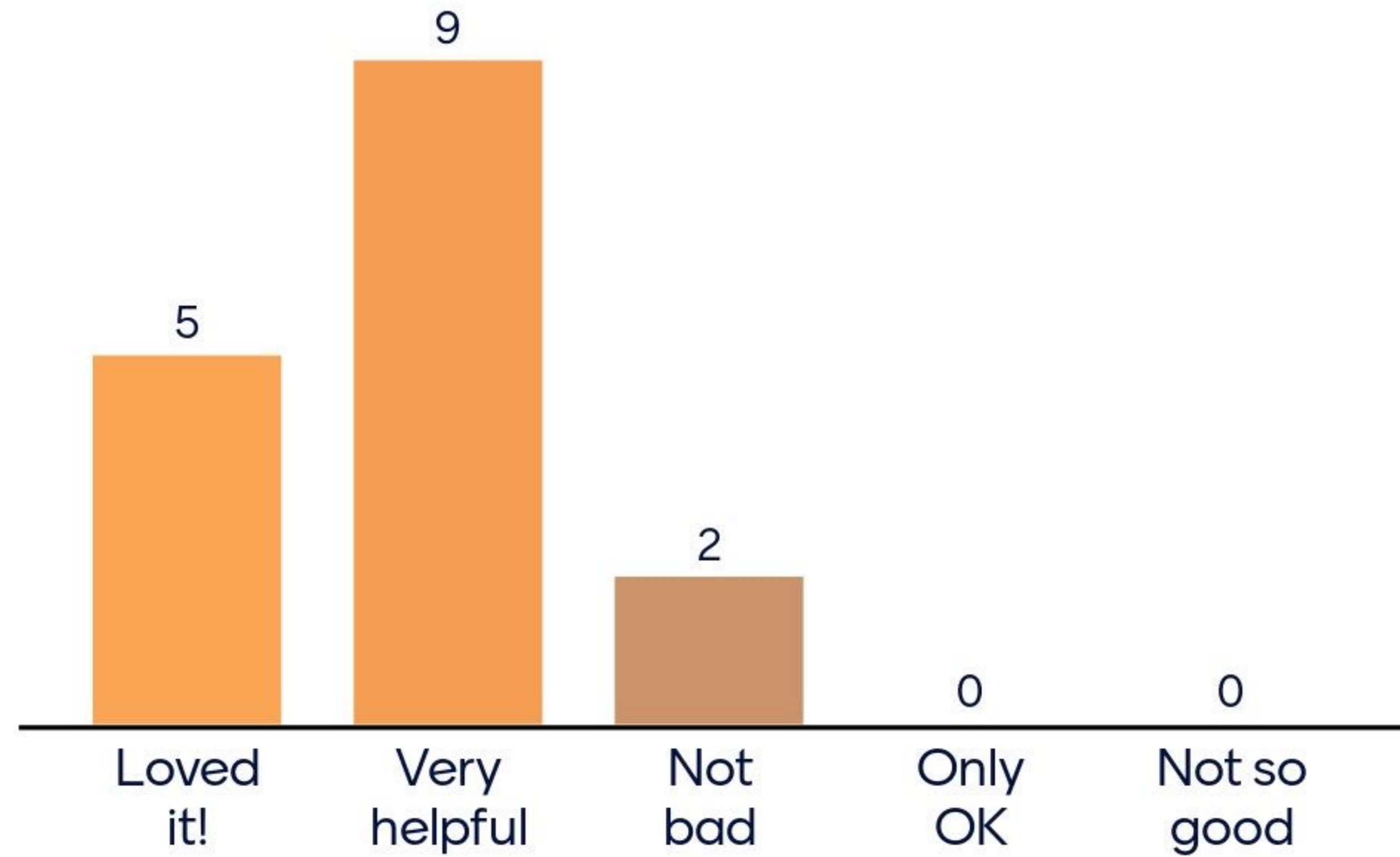
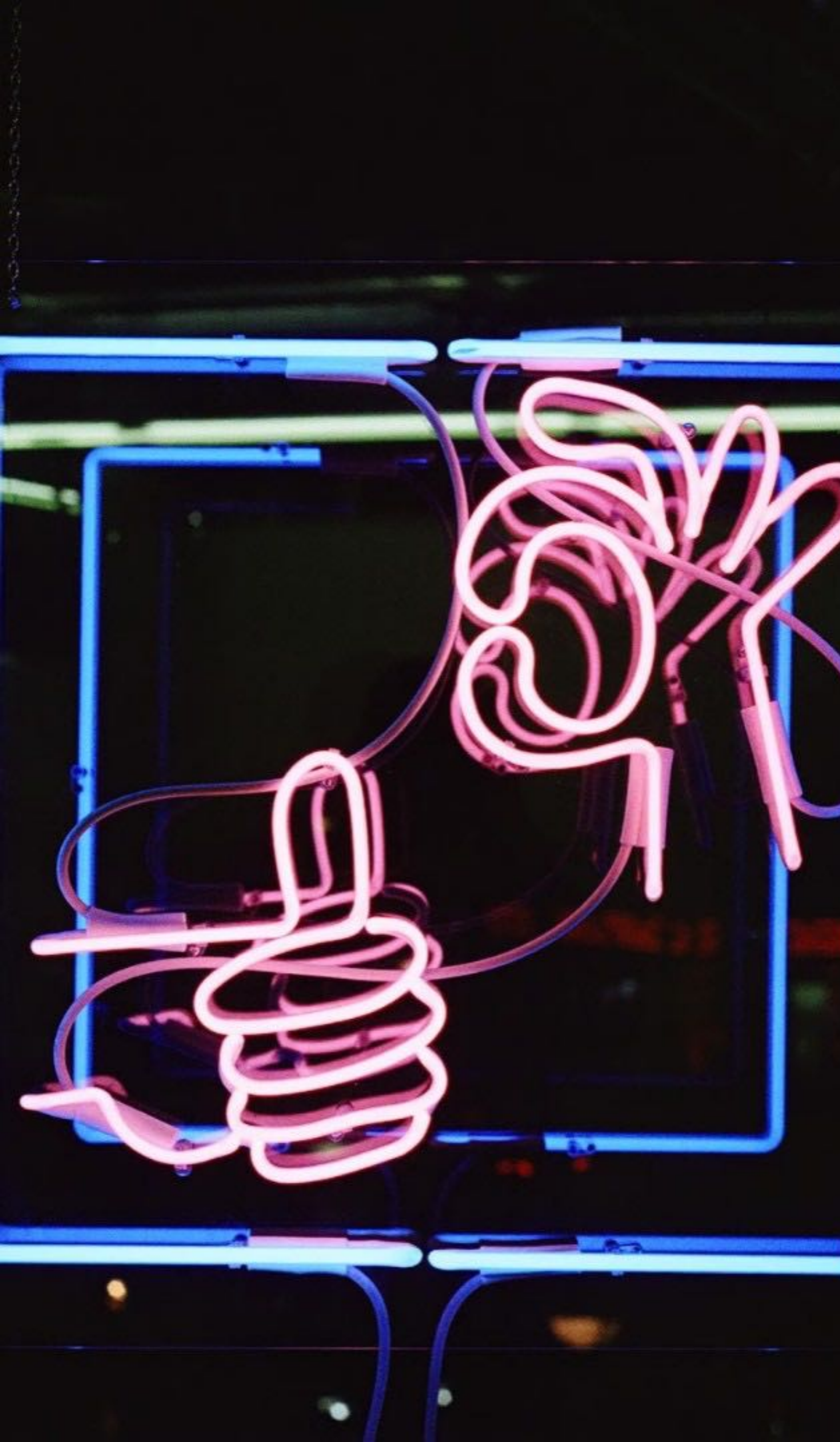


Your facilitated session needs to accomplish more than the value each individual could have generated by working for the same amount of time.

– *Rebecca Sutherns, from **NIMBLE, A Coaching Guide for Responsive Facilitation, 2019***



Feedback for us: To what extent was this session useful?



THANK YOU



INFO@CMC-ONTARIO.CA

[HTTPS://CMC-CANADA.CA/ONTARIO](https://CMC-CANADA.CA/ONTARIO)