



## Facilitation: An Invisible Skill in Successful Organizations

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Definition of facilitate: To make easier, help bring about; to free from obstruction or difficulty

### Identifying Effective Facilitators:

Four program directors were asked: “Identify a person in your organization who is not in a formal leadership position but is effective getting things done, particularly on teams or in activities that involve more than one person. When this person is involved, things just seem to flow more easily with good outcomes.”

Seven people were identified from four family medicine residencies

Participant role and gender.

<u>Role</u>	<u>Gender</u>
Care Manager	F
Clinical Faculty	F
Clinical Faculty	M
Medical Assistant	F
Practice Coach	F
Registration Coordinator	F
Social Worker	F

### Data Collection:

Videotaped interviews were conducted with three program directors and seven subjects (“effective facilitators”)

### Data Analysis:

Using a qualitative approach, the author reviewed the videotaped interviews to identify common characteristics based on participant statements. Characteristics described in at least 50% of the interviews were included in the results.

## Results:

### Characteristics of Exemplary Facilitators

- Action-oriented – moves process forward, task-oriented, practical
- Organized – detail-oriented
- Positive attitude – enthusiastic, brings energy
- Compassionate – kind, supports others
- Sense of humor – wit, brings lightness to situation
- Empathy – perceptive, picks up on and anticipates needs/feelings of others
- Self-management – emotional self-control

The majority of the exemplary facilitators stated they do not aspire to be in a formal leadership position

## Discussion:

### Potential Applications

1. Help leaders and managers to intentionally recognize and reward those individuals
2. Strategic placement of such individuals when forming teams
3. Criteria in the screening and interviewing process when hiring for specific positions

The results suggest the exemplary facilitators in this sample possess a unique combination of three general domains: task orientation, relational skills and support, and emotional intelligence

1. Task orientation: a) taking action and b) organized/detail-oriented.
2. Relational skills and support: a) positive attitude and enthusiasm, b) caring and compassion, and c) humor
3. Emotional intelligence: a) empathy/ awareness of others' feelings and needs and b) emotional self-management

### Conclusion:

- Suggests that some individuals in family medicine residencies are skilled at facilitation, bringing value to teams, projects, and processes
- These exemplary facilitators have unique characteristics that are distinct from leaders and managers
- This study brings up additional questions, such as how these characteristics are attained, how to identify such key people to improve internal processes, and how to reward, support, and retain such people



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