

01	Behavioral Workshop Facilitation
01	Five Sins of Email
02	My Life in a Nutshell
02	10 Tips for Your First COMPASS Presentation
03	It's all about me: Why e-mails are so easily misunderstood
03	Excerpt from "Pop Culture in the Name of Islam"
03	Excerpt from "From Sami Yusuf to Yvonne Riddley"

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Behavioral Workshop Facilitation

IDRIS ELBAKRI

Behaviorism focuses on the action required for change. When applied to workshop facilitation, the facilitator assists the participant in obtaining specific skills and knowledge. This approach is both outcome and process oriented.

To achieve this type of workshop facilitation, the facilitator must consider 3 aspects:

1. The factors that must be learned for the desired outcome. What is needed to achieve the workshop's SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) learning objectives?
2. Arrange these factors in a step-by-step, consistent matter.
3. Present skill development in a learn-by-doing process, using repetition and practice.

In order to assist the facilitator in designing and effectively delivering a workshop, behavioral facilitation experts have outlined 14 separate but interrelated components of behavioral facilitation. Four of these are considered the "pillars" or foundation of this approach. In this article, we will discuss these 4 pillars, and hope to cover the remaining 10 in subsequent articles. The 4 pillars are:

1. Automatic rotation. Give each member individual attention. In order to achieve this, the facilitator should interact in systematic rotation with each participant in the workshop. This allows for ALL participants to interact equally. For example, imagine a workshop where the

participants are seated in a U-shaped arrangement. The facilitator engages one participant, termed the kingpin. The facilitator then interacts with the other participants, starting with the one adjacent to the kingpin, and proceeds to interact with all others by going round the room in a clockwise or counter clockwise manner. This ensures that all participants are engaged, and virtually eliminates the possibility of any participant being missed. It also gives the participants a sense of order and establishes the facilitators control over the workshop.

2. Brief talk. Behavioral facilitation emphasizes learning by doing. To maximize this, the facilitator should not engage in more than 2-5 minutes of instruction, before moving on to an activity or hands-on experience. This is counterintuitive because we often feel we have so much to say. A good way to overcome this counter-intuitive feeling is to consider that many times, a facilitator is helping (facilitating) the participants to bring out knowledge and experience that is already in them. Lecturing them will not achieve that. Talking briefly and maximizing the time for hands-on learning is the way to go!
3. Positive reinforcement, constant encouragement and praise. The facilitator should give consistent and positive reinforcement even for small accomplishments. This means saying "thank you", "appreciate that", "great

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Five Sins of Email

FARAZ RABBANI

1. *Not being clear*

Go out of your way to explain yourself, clearly, especially when correcting others or expressing disagreement.

2. *Going on and on*

People are busy. Respect that, and get to your point quickly and clearly.

3. *Sending huge attachments*

People use email for work. Huge attachments slow them down.

4. *Writing poorly or being too curt*

This turns people off what you write; and can lead to misunderstandings or (worse) arguments.

5. *Not using clear subject lines*

People are busy. Tell them what you're writing about in the subject line. Saying, "Important," or "Read this," is not helpful.

From *Seeker's Digest*, www.seekersdigest.org/five-sins-of-email.html

My Life in a Nutshell

LINA HASHEM

Bismillah Ar Rahman Ar Raheem

December of 1976, Abdul and Rizia had an arranged marriage in Bangladesh. Abdul returned to the States after marriage and later Rosy joined him and in September, 1977 Lisa joined them to start off the Hashem family. Four years later – October of 1981, I popped out and we stayed a family of four ever since.

I grew up in Northern Virginia, now residing with my parents in Leesburg. I was an all around athlete from Elementary to High School and even went to the Junior Olympics for Basketball. I stopped playing for the Varsity Basketball team after my Junior year in High School because I didn't like where the team was going.

Senior year of High School I met a good friend dear to me even to this day. Her name is Amna and she is what I call my bab al Islam. Soon after I met Amna and became good friends with her, I started attending Saturday school at our local Masjid, ADAMS. I fell in love with what I saw, with the community and started learning more about Islam and began practicing it.

I went to George Mason University and majored in Decision Science and Management Information Systems and minored in Information Technology. Throughout my years at Mason, I became active at the local, regional, and national levels of MSA. Serving as Sisters' Coordinator for the GMU MSA, DC Council Secretary and Chair, and Vice President of MSA National. After graduating from Mason, I started working at a law firm in downtown DC for the IT Department while also serving as Ex-Officio for MSA National. I worked there for almost two years and have vowed to never work for another corporate law firm ever again. Alhumdullilah, after working at the law firm, I landed myself a job at Booz Allen Hamilton, a Management and IT Consulting Firm, which happened to be my dream job throughout college.

Currently, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, working, traveling, biking, hiking, and reading more.

That's my life in a nutshell.

BEHAVIORAL WORKSHOP FACILITATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

insight”, etc... One way that I have seen positive reinforcement done is by using praise words that start with the same letter as the name of the participant. “Idris the ideal”, for example.

4. Directive approach. Facilitation must be action oriented. Give participants instructions. Do not make request. “This what we will do and this is how we will do it” is good. “Would you like to do this” is bad. This establishes the facilitators control over the workshop and minimizes “sabotage” by uncooperative participants. The directive approach also means that we deal with people's feelings, but don't dwell on them and don't go after them. For example, a participant may say, “I am not comfortable with the workshop format”. The facilitator could affirm that by saying, “I appreciate your feedback”, and then move on.

In addition to these 4 pillars and the other 10 components of behavioral facilitation, conducting a workshop is greatly enhanced by interactive learning. The latter often requires that workshop participants be divided into groups. As a homework assignment, each COMPASS trainer should come up with 3 ways to divide people up in groups, and send them to the editor of the next e-bulletin. Get creative. For example, you could divide the room into 2 groups, people with and without glasses!

And God knows best.

Acknowledgement: I received training and certification in behavioral facilitation from the Winnipeg Transition Center. Content for this article has come from material provided to me during that training.

Hadith of the Prophet

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “Do not wish to be like anyone except in two cases. (The first is) A person, whom Allah has given wealth and he spends it righteously; (the second is) the one whom Allah has given wisdom (the Holy Qur'an) and he acts according to it and teaches it to others.”

10 Tips for Your First COMPASS Presentation

FARHAN LATIF

1. Be prepared. Take everything possible with you. Checklist
 - Presentation power point on USB
 - Laptop (containing presentation). I used my laptop since there was not one setup for me.
 - Keep white board markers and post stick on posters.
 - The point being, try to keep everything you can so that your presentation does not rely on host.
 - Copies of slides with less text in order to give handouts. People should be able to fill in notes while you speak.
 - Candy, give away stuff or anything for crowd participation.
2. Talk to visiting campus or residents of location to acquire as much as knowledge as possible. This can be done by striking a conversation with participants in the room prior to your presentation. Its like doing a quick focus group.
3. Learn peoples names and their respective campuses so you can refer to them, or customize presentation while speaking.
4. Don't let questions bog you down or take you off your presentation.
5. Assign someone to manage power point as you speak. This allows flexibility to you , to move around the room.
6. Audience check, keep asking questions to participants to keep them engaged or to see if they understand what your explaining.
7. Repeat questions people ask or comments made so everyone can hear them, plus it helps in clarity for yourself.
8. Do not be disappointed with turn out or crowd behavior, let it motivate you to do better and try harder. Reiterate your intentions and MSA National guiding principles.
9. Take down peoples names and email addresses to do follow ups or for questions etc.
10. Pass a hand out of COMPASS training and an overview so they can help spread the word about the resource that we offer.

For copy of presentation please see attachment

It's all about me: Why e-mails are so easily misunderstood

DANIEL ENEMARK

Michael Morris and Jeff Lowenstein wouldn't have recognized each other if they'd met on the street, but that didn't stop them from getting into a shouting match. The professors had been working together on a research study when a technical glitch inconvenienced Mr. Lowenstein. He complained in an e-mail, raising Mr. Morris's ire. Tempers flared.

"It became very embarrassing later," says Morris, when it turned out there had been a miscommunication, "but we realized that we couldn't blame each other for yelling about it because that's what we were studying."

Morris and Lowenstein are among the scholars studying the benefits and dangers of e-mail and other computer-based interactions. In a world where businesses and friends often depend upon e-mail to communicate, scholars want to know if electronic communications convey ideas clearly.

The answer, the professors conclude, is sometimes "no." Though e-mail is a powerful and convenient medium, researchers have identified three major problems. First and foremost, e-mail lacks cues like facial

expression and tone of voice. That makes it difficult for recipients to decode meaning well. Second, the prospect of instantaneous communication creates an urgency that pressures e-mailers to think and write quickly, which can lead to carelessness. Finally, the inability to develop personal rapport over e-mail makes relationships fragile in the face of conflict.

In effect, e-mail cannot adequately convey emotion. A recent study by Profs. Justin Kruger of New York University and Nicholas Epley of the University of Chicago focused on how well sarcasm is detected in electronic messages. Their conclusion: Not only do e-mail senders overestimate their ability to communicate feelings, but e-mail recipients also overestimate their ability to correctly decode those feelings.

One reason for this, the business-school professors say, is that people are egocentric. They assume others experience stimuli the same way they do. Also, e-mail lacks body language, tone of voice, and other cues - making it difficult to interpret emotion.

"A typical e-mail has this feature of seeming like face-to-face communication," Professor Epley says. "It's informal and it's rapid, so you assume you're getting the same paralinguistic cues you get from spoken communication."

To avoid miscommunication, e-mailers need to look at what they write from the recipient's perspective, Epley says. One

strategy: Read it aloud in the opposite way you intend, whether serious or sarcastic. If it makes sense either way, revise. Or, don't rely so heavily on e-mail. Because e-mails can be ambiguous, "criticism, subtle intentions, emotions are better carried over the phone," he says.

E-mail's ambiguity has special implications for minorities and women, because it tends to feed the preconceptions of a recipient. "You sign your e-mail with a name that people can use to make inferences about your ethnicity," says Epley. A misspelling in a black colleague's e-mail may be seen as ignorance, whereas a similar error by a white colleague might be excused as a typo.

If you're vulnerable to this kind of unintentional prejudice, pick up the phone: People are much less likely to prejudge after communicating by phone than they are after receiving an e-mail. Kruger and Epley demonstrated this when they asked 40 women at Cornell to administer a brief interview, 20 by phone and 20 by e-mail. They then asked a third group of 20, the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Excerpt from "Pop Culture in the Name of Islam"

YVONNE RIDLEY

Eminent scholars throughout history have often opined that music is haram, and I don't recall reading anything about the Sahaba whooping it up to the sound of music. Don't get me wrong. I'm all for people letting off steam, but in a dignified manner and one which is appropriate to their surroundings.

The reason I am expressing concern is that just a few days ago at a venue in Central London, sisters went wild in the aisles as some form of pop-mania swept through the concert venue. And I'm not just talking about silly, little girls who don't know any better; I am talking about sisters in their 20's, 30's and 40's, who squealed, shouted, swayed and danced. Of course the stage groupies did not help at all as they waved and encouraged the largely female Muslim crowd to "get up and sing along."

The source of all this adulation was British-born Sami Yusuf, who is so proud of his claret-colored passport that he wants us all to wave the Union Jacks. I'm amazed he didn't encourage his fans to sing "Land of Hope and Glory." Brother Sami asked his audience to cheer if they were proud to be British, and when they responded loudly, he said he couldn't hear them and asked them to cheer again.

From www.muslimsweekly.com

Excerpt from "From Sami Yusuf to Yvonne Riddley"

SAMI YUSUF

As a Muslim artist, I regularly seek clarification and advice from world-renowned scholars on art, music, singing and culture. Be informed that the subject of music is one of the most controversial topics in Islamic Jurisprudence. I respect those who consider music to be haram. Yes eminent scholars of our past have opined such. However, I respect and follow the opinion of other eminent scholars - classical and contemporary, who permit singing and the use of musical instruments. The well-established jurisprudential rule states that 'in matters where there is ikhtilaf (differences of opinion) there is to be no condemnation of either opinion.' This is from the beauty of the religion of Islam. The diversity of our cultural, legal and social traditions is something we are in dire need of celebrating not condemning. So let's agree to disagree on this one.

From www.muslimsweekly.com

*WHY E-MAILS ARE MISUNDERSTOOD,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3*

“targets,” to answer the phone interviewers’ questions. They sent a transcription of the targets’ answers to the e-mail interviewers.

The professors then handed each interviewer what they said was a photo of her subject. In reality, each got a picture of either an Asian or an African-American woman (in reality, all were white).

E-mail interviewers who thought the sender was Asian considered her social skills to be poor, while those who believed the sender was black considered her social skills to be excellent. In stark contrast, the difference in perceived sociability almost completely disappeared when interviewer and target had talked on the phone.

E-mail tends to be short and to the point. This may arise from the time pressures we feel when writing them: We know e-mail arrives as soon as we send it, so we feel we should write it quickly, too. On the other hand, letters depend on postal timetables. A letter writer feels he has a bigger window of time to think and write.

Psychologists Massimo Bertacco and Antonella Deponete call this characteristic “speed facilitation,” and they believe it influences our episodic memory - our ability to recall events. They found that e-mailers wrote shorter messages and were less likely to “ground their communications” in memories of shared experience than letters writers were.

The brevity of e-mail and the absence of audiovisual cues can endanger business and personal relationships unless e-mail is supplemented with the rapport that comes from more personal communication.

“Rapport creates a buffer of positive regard,” says Professor Morris, “and when it’s not there negotiation becomes brittle, vulnerable to falling apart.”







Morris, who studies negotiation at Columbia, led a study that found that negotiators exchange more than three times the information in face-to-face interactions as they do via e-mail. Though Morris and his colleagues concluded that e-mail lets negotiators make “more complex, multiple-issue offers,” they ultimately built less rapport, thereby increasing tensions and lowering the average economic value of the agreements.

Rapport “is an interpersonal resonance of emotional expression,” Morris says, “involving synchronous gesture, laughing, and smiling together. Once this rapport exists, it’s a buffer against a moment in the negotiation when there’s some friction.” This buffer is hard to develop without speaking over the phone or in person. Those who negotiated by e-mail in Morris’s study trusted each other less and weren’t as interested in working together again.

But the pitfalls of e-mail interaction were easily overcome by a single phone call. Morris ran a second round of negotiations, all conducted via e-mail, but made half of the corresponding pairs chat on the phone before negotiating - “just for five or 10 minutes,” Morris explains, “and the key thing is we told them, ‘Don’t get into the issues. It’s just an icebreaker.’” The result was dramatically improved agreements.

So if you want to buy something on Craig’s List, Morris says, “make a brief phone call, even if it’s not practical to do the whole negotiation by phone. You can establish a favorable bias with someone and then proceed in a less rich medium, but it’s very hard to just get right into the negotiation on a medium that isn’t rich.”

How well do we communicate?

FREQUENCY THAT...	E-MAIL	PHONE
Communicator believes he is clearly communicating	 78%	 78%
Receiver believes he is correctly interpreting	 89%	 91%
Receiver correctly interprets message	 56%	 73%

*From The Christian Science Monitor,
www.csmonitor.com*

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The Mission of COMPASS

To train Muslim students to manage highly effective campus organizations with dedication and excellence. The training philosophy of COMPASS is rooted in the guiding principles of MSA National.