

What's It Cost to Hire a Facilitator

Let's say you are asked to find a facilitator for a half-day (4 hour) meeting by your boss. You've never done this before and you're a little concerned about paying too much. So, how much should you expect to pay for this facilitator? This is a tough question and one faced by people every day!

A facilitator does between 50% and 70% of their work before you turn the lights on in the meeting room. When you call a facilitator, here is what they must consider in giving you a quote. Every facilitator must do some **Pre-Work**. If they don't, tell them thank you for your help, hang up and try the next on your list. Pre-work is critical to your event. It starts with questions for the liaison, and then, after being hired, meeting with the sponsor and team leader. During this meeting we seek to understand the purpose, deliverables, needs and expectations for the event. It also includes interviews with group members to understand the climate, and environment that the facilitator is stepping into. Not all group members are interviewed but a few are and more may be required if there are

Pre-Work
4 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intake• Interviews• Planning• Agenda Design

detectable issues and conflict is likely. The group facilitator then incorporates what they learned during the interviews in the design of the basic agenda. This is discussed with the group leader and, when approved, the facilitator turns this general structure into a facilitation plan by laying out the activities, structures, and material requirements for each agenda item. The structures include instructions, a question plan, information gathering method, and processing methodology. The facilitator also anticipates alternative methods to achieve the desired results as a fall back in case things don't go as planned.

The day before the meeting, the facilitator conducts an **Event Prep**. This is a walk through of the activities to ensure the plan will generate the expected results and that they are prepared to deliver the documentation required. This may also include a reality check from another facilitator. Finally, the facilitator will gather the materials and equipment needed to support the event. As a general rule of thumb, for 1 hour of facilitation the facilitator will require 1.5 to 2.5 hours to conduct the Pre-Work and Event Preparations.

Event Prep
2 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Process Walk through• Gather materials• Prep Report Templates

On the day of the event the facilitator will arrive at least one hour before the workshop starts to **Set-Up** and organize the space. This can include moving seats and tables, posting flipcharts, setting up easels, computers and projector, or sticky walls, and a supplies area to organize the materials planned for use during the event. A rule of thumb that many facilitators are taught is to arrive early enough so that the set up is done one-half hour before the participants arrive so they can properly meet and greet the participants.

Set-Up
1 hour
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Arrive• Organize room• Set up materials

Next, it is time for the facilitator to **Do the Meeting** work with the group during the planned time. This includes guiding the group through activities

Do Meeting
4 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work agenda• Document changes

and intervening to ensure we are effectively communicating with one another and that we are documenting the results as we go.

At the conclusion of the meeting the participants usually leave for home or their offices and the facilitator must conduct a **Break-Down** of the event. We take care to organize the “artifacts” of the event so that they can be accurately documented in a timely fashion.

Break-Down
.5 to 1 hour
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take down data to enable accurate recording Pack materials

Back at our office the facilitator pulls the artifacts of the meeting, our notes and worksheets to **Write a Report** that fairly represents the results of the event. This is usually our final deliverable and can vary in scope significantly. For the simplest reports it may take from .5 to 1 hour for every hour in the meeting. For more detailed reports this can double to two hours for each hour in the meeting.

Write Report
2 to 4 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple representative report, or Detailed Report w/ recommendations

When taken as a whole what appears to be a simple four-hour meeting reveals itself to be a significant amount of work taking 13.5 to 16 hours.

Pre-Work	Event Prep	Set-Up	Do Meeting	Break-Down	Write Report
4 hours	2 hours	1 hour	4 hours	.5 to 1 hour	2 to 4 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intake Interviews Planning Agenda Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Process Walk through Gather materials Prep Report Templates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive Organize room Set up materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work agenda Document changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take down data to enable accurate recording Pack materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple representative report

There are two more things you should know. First is the fee one charges for their services. Like consulting there are no industry standard fees for facilitation. So the rates you are likely to see will vary significantly. We have conducted an ongoing survey of “direct hour” fees at www.MAFN.org since October 2005. Here are the hourly rate results with 62 respondents:

< \$150	\$150 to \$199	\$200 to \$249	\$250 >
17.7%	24.2%	22.6%	16%
<i>< Least Experience</i>		<i>Most Experience ></i>	
<i>New Company</i>		<i>Well Established Firms</i>	

The bottom two rows are not results of the poll yet these have been deduced based on other questions seen in the polls. DLCCG fees fall in the lower three tiers based on experience, education, and assessed level of expertise.

Finally one more issue around fees. There are two basic methods for determining fees. Both consider the break down of the time it takes to do an event like the one above. Most facilitators charge a fee by the “direct” hour while others charge their fees by the “contact” hour. The direct hour rates will charge you for the time, by the hour, devoted to your project. For the contact hour rate the facilitator uses a multiplier for each hour. This is somewhere between 2.5 and 4. In the case above you might expect about 6 contact hours with a multiplier of 2.5.