



## Workshop Facilitation Services From Rainmaker





## Are you wrestling with some of these issues?

- You've merged a company or brought together groups of people
- The new team need to revisit how we manage around here
- What are the behaviours that we really value? Let's communicate those
- You need to build a shared vision of where you are heading next
- There are fundamental changes out in the market place...
- You need to make your teams aware of the changes and work out how to respond



- You want to generate **new ideas on product innovation**
- You just want new ideas on how to grow faster
- You want to collect thoughts on how to best save money
- You want to make your processes more efficient
- You want to move from **Customer Satisfaction** to **Customer Delight**
- You want to build a shared plan with your team with prioritised actions and owners
- You can **Land** into new customers but you cannot seem to **Expand**
- You would like to do **more of what works** and **less of what doesn't**  
You'd really like to work out what is what!
- You need to rally the team around a new vision
- You would like to install a new set of values in the team
- You want to do some business focused team building



**Workshop Facilitation services  
from Rainmaker are your answer**



## The 7 principles of Rainmaker's facilitation services

People have an amazing capacity to collaborate and generate creative solutions. Yet so much gets in the way of this natural human ability. The following 7 principles summarise our approach to effective workshop facilitation.

### 1. People own what they help create

To feel engaged and enthusiastic about an outcome people need to own it.

#### **We call this BUILDING A SHARED PLAN**

Just telling people or imposing a decision rarely engenders real commitment.

#### **We call this SHARING A BUILT PLAN**

The obvious answer is to engage people in the decision making process. Managers and leaders fear that people will make poor decisions, however our experience is that when people have the facts and are given the space to work as a collective they make great decisions. Furthermore, implementation of those decisions is far more effective and rapid.

### 2. Work backwards from the desired future state

To go from the problem to a solution without articulating the desired future state has severe limitations. There are many more creative possibilities in the future scenario than in the present scenario. Painting a picture of how the world could be is a lot more motivating and exciting than describing and analysing the current problems.

Einstein once said something similar to 'The thinking that got you here will not get you out of here'. In our experience there is little point generating options and actions from a place you don't want to be.

### 3. Parallel processing is faster

In the workshops that we run for clients we find that the brightest most articulate people do not always have all the answers. In fact a room left to its own devices will tend to work on less than 50% of the information and knowledge available in the room.

The most dominant people by position or personality will control the conversation, while the more reserved people will contribute nothing or little and will have discussions later about why what was decided will not work.

By having the same question addressed concurrently by separate groups greatly speeds up the ability of the group to process information. We always have high confidence in a group response if three or more sub-groups have independently come to the same conclusion.

### 4. Listen to everything, defend nothing

A Rainmaker facilitator's role is to remain neutral and listen to everything said and feed it back accurately to the group.

People come into the room with many different views. For example, production, marketing, sales, maintenance, administration...all see the world differently. However, it is the culmination of all these perspectives and interdependencies which provides a whole view of the situation.

Your Rainmaker facilitator will be 100% present for the group and able to remain open to all the input from the group. Things will be said that we may not agree with. Yet to maintain the open dialogue we will not defend a view but treat all views with equal respect and space.



## **5. The 7 plus or minus 2 Rule**

The combinations and permutations of diverse groups' opinions seem incalculable. However we find that in the majority of workshops the underlying issues typically fit the '7 plus or minus 2 Rule'.

Why 7 plus or minus 2? Research suggests the human brain categorises subjects into a relatively small set so it can remember, process and use information.

A group is a collection of human brains and displays this same effective categorising capability. We use a topic mapping technique to diagrammatically cluster the group's inputs. The mapping is simple to learn and allows seemingly random input to naturally collect into the 7 plus or minus 2 topics.

## **6. Speed improves the quality of group decisions**

People have different speeds of thinking and interacting, yet we all have a rapid cognition capability that works best under time pressure. The first intuitive response is usually better than a long drawn out analytical process. As the room becomes a safe place to explore ideas, the ability of the room to process complex information and make decisions also speeds up.

The other benefit speed brings, is that the group starts accessing the lateral leaps in thinking that leads to creative ideas. Groups surprise themselves with the speed with which they can collectively process information and make decisions.

Experience has shown us that the quality of these decisions is high, as after the workshop more progress and breakthroughs are made.

## **7. Proximity helps create a level playing field**

We find that the best dialogue comes when people stop hiding behind their roles and start talking as on the same level. To create this level playing field people need to be physically close to one another.

A good test is that they are able to put their arms out so their fingers can still touch. Without this proximity, effective human dialogue breaks down. This means most large meeting room tables are a disaster for human to human interaction. The way we overcome this is to break larger groups into small tables and have them work as small clusters of typically 4 to 7 people.

Once people are comfortable with the group process you can 'maximum mix' the groups so each group becomes a microcosm of the whole. It is really interesting to see the Board members stop and listen to junior staff and realise wisdom can be found everywhere.



## How will the Rainmaker Team help you?

We will listen intently to you and your team to get a clear understanding of the issues that you face, the pressures that you are under, the current situation that you and your organisation are in and get an idea of where you would like to move to, in what timescales.

We'll work to co-create your ideal outcome that you wish to achieve with our assistance. Armed with that, we will agree with you the format of the workshop that we think will suit you and we'll come up with an agreed set of activities and outcomes.

Here's a selection of the services that we offer to our clients

### Workshops from Rainmaker

- **Scenario Planning Workshops**
  - Getting the teams aware of changes from inside and outside
  - Looking at Trends and Uncertainties in the marketplace
  - Agreeing a few possible scenarios and working through impacts
  - Agreeing an ideal positioning to profit from the changes
  - Setting out a plan of initiatives with owners and timescales
  - Agreeing a set of variables to scan for changes
  
- **Business Planning Workshops**
  - Building a shared vision with a newly put together team
  - Building a mission , purpose, direction and shared values for the team
  - Getting everyone involved to build a simple shared plan
    - 3 to 4 key breakthrough objectives
    - Owners , Timescales and measures Quick wins identified
  
- **Business Improvement Workshops**
  - Brainstorming ideas for Product or services improvement
  - Collecting ideas to save money or reduce costs
  - Building plans to implement the ideas
  - Taking a look at your key processes
    - From Contact or initial enquiry to starting a project
    - From Project start to Project Completion
    - From Quotation through invoice to cash collection
  
- **Revenue Generation Workshops**
  - Account planning for Sales People
  - Client Business Development Workshops for Services Deliverers
    - What opportunities are there in our clients for our services
    - Generating a contact plan to explore opportunities

## Meet some of the Workshop Facilitators



**Allan James** has facilitated small and large groups all over the world. Mergers and Acquisitions have been part of his work. As an Organisation Development and Organisational Efficiency guru he takes change management best practices into account. He's also trained in LEAN processes.

**Workshops: Knowledge / World Café + Scenario + Change Management**



**Graham Hodge** with 36 yrs international business experience has facilitated:  
The strategic planning of a global industry body  
The global grocery industry to improve supply chain performance  
A global initiative between manufacturers and their suppliers to identify and drive collaborative improvement projects  
An NHS Trust in reviewing its approach in meeting government targets

**Workshops: Business Planning & Senior Leaders**



**Mark Hobson:** Mark is an experienced sales manager with over 25 years working in the IT industry both in the UK and across EMEA. He has held sales and sales management roles at Hewlett Packard and Andersen Consulting

**Workshops: Revenue Generation**



**Chris Gamblin:** Chris is a very experienced facilitator. Much of his experience is in the defence and public sectors. His style is suitable to environments where senior leaders appreciate a challenging and yet structured style that usually gets the best of the workshop attendees

**Workshops: Business Planning, Culture Change & Senior Leaders**



**Kevin Howes:** He's facilitated workshops of many types around the UK in many different industries. His no nonsense down to business style is appreciated by his many clients. He's an experienced LEAN practitioner and MCPID

**Workshops: Business Planning, Business Improvement + Revenue Generation**



**Sally Prescott:** Sally has many years experience of Learning and Development in some of the largest hotel chains in the world. Her focus is on customer satisfaction and ensuring the customer journey is both enjoyed and profitable for both parties. She has facilitated senior leadership teams to deploy new values and visions

**Workshops: Business Improvement Planning and Leadership Development**



**John Gloster-Smith:** Works extensively in the public sector and education. His style is focused and results-orientated but informal, with a strong ability to ask exactly the right questions that pick up the key issues and get to the heart of the matter.

**Workshops: Business Planning + Business Improvement**

## Some of our clients

Our Client	Workshop Activities with them
 <p>CareSyst CareSyst software designed for care providers</p>	<p>Whole Company Business Planning Exercise and Sales Account Planning Workshops For this Care Home focused Software Company</p>
 <p>Equality and Human Rights Commission</p>	<p>Facilitation of External Non-Executives on how to run policy meetings and make progress on a variety of different topics</p>
 <p>Kavanagh</p>	<p>Working with the whole Sales Force Built a Shared Sales Plan with 4 Key Breakthroughs For the IT Reseller</p>
 <p>Regus</p>	<p>Working with the Major Account Sales team built Major Account Business Development Plans For the Office Outsourcer</p>
 <p>tmp.worldwide WE'RE ALL YOURS</p>	<p>Covering the top 10 clients. Workshops to look for new opportunities to develop more business and building simple plans to contact clients with ideas with the Recruitment Advertiser</p>
 <p>TelecityGroup where content meets connectivity</p>	<p>Bringing together a European Sales Team and Local Managing Directors to develop new ways of helping major clients looking for services to be offered simply across each and every European data centre</p>
 <p>hp invent</p>	<p>Building Business Unit plans with Breakthrough objectives and simple regularly reviewable plans</p>
 <p>bp</p>	<p>Building a simple set of scenarios to deal with an emerging threat to a major business stream with a Global team from across the business</p>
 <p>ABICARE SERVICES For Independent Living</p>	<p>Working with the CEO and the Leadership Team To build a vision for the future of the company with a simple plan to deliver Quick Wins For this home care provider</p>
 <p>Griffon Hoverwork</p>	<p>A Brainstorming session with this Hovercraft manufacturing company and one of their key customers to come up with product improvement ideas</p>
 <p>Microsoft</p>	<p>Business Planning Sessions for very large numbers of people in the Services Business unit. Building and Implementing Shared Plans</p>
 <p>VINCI ENERGIES</p>	<p>17 Board Members / 5 Business units developing a shared plan to build cooperative working with BUs and strengthen Brand Identity "Best thing we've done in the last 10 years"</p>



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