



Case Study: The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario

The College of Physiotherapists of Ontario (CPO) regulates and ensures the ongoing improvement of the practice of physiotherapists, also known as physical therapists, to protect and serve the public interest. The College's work is directed by a Council (similar to a Board of Directors) whose job it is to represent the interests of the public (such as, patients looking for physiotherapy services). In order to achieve their strategic plan, the College relies on many volunteer based committees lead by a Committee Chair.

The Challenge

There was a general feeling that in many committee meetings, the best ideas were not being surfaced or only a few members were consistently contributing ideas. Members would "go along" with the meeting but demonstrated a lack of buy-in by staying silent rather than identifying further research or analysis requirements and inexplicably reversing their position at a subsequent meeting. Another problem was that many meetings ended ambiguously with no clear understanding of what had been agreed on or what the next steps would be. This lack of follow-through and concise action planning negatively impacted each Chair's ability to accomplish their designated strategic initiatives within their two-year term.





The Solution

Shenda Tanchak, Registrar and CEO of the CPO approached Facilitation First to develop a pragmatic approach to training their Committee Chairs with the goal of providing them with the tools and techniques necessary to define meeting outcomes, maximize engagement and lead effective consensus building.

Facilitation First in turn developed a customized, highly interactive one-day workshop with a workshop manual containing meeting simulations and simple templates that Chairs could use to design their meetings.

The Outcome

Feedback from participants was so overwhelmingly positive that Ms. Tanchak immediately saw the benefit of having internal staff and the Board trained in core facilitation techniques so that their internal meetings could be more effectively run.

Ms. Tanchak says their meetings have experienced a dramatic improvement and are ten times more effective than before the training took place. Shenda describes the changes as follows:



- A definite decrease in the number of meetings needed to achieve an outcome since the need to revisit old topics over and over again has been virtually eliminated
- Board and Committees are able to achieve more strategic initiatives since they move through issues faster
- Committee Chairs feel that their new meeting tools empower them to move the meeting along and provides much needed credibility with volunteer members with whom they have no direct authority
- With well planned agendas and increased confidence, College staff are able to draw out much better input from all board members
- Board members feel the meetings are a much better use of their time and feel far more engaged than ever before
- Internal meetings are run much more effectively, with more thoughtful questions asked, more balanced participation and far fewer interruptions
- Staff debriefs after key meetings are much more effective because they have a common language/process to use when discussing what went well and room for improvement

Ms. Tanchak concluded that the most exciting impact from the training is that each Committee is able to move through each strategic initiative more quickly, achieving more in less time.

Facilitation First offers *Facilitating Meetings With Ease* in both public and in-house training workshops. For more information, call us at the number listed below or click here: <http://facilitationfirst.com/training>