Chairing Versus Facilitating

Chairs	Facilitators
• Follow a process (i.e. Robert's Rules of Order)	• Follow a process defined by the needs of the situation (i.e. Strategic Planning, Systematic Problem-solving, etc.) and the degree of participation required.
• Rules are defined and told to the group and are managed by the Chair.	• Rules are created by the group and are managed by both the facilitator and the group.
• Decision-making is strictly by majority vote.	• Decision-making varies depending on the needs of the group, and uses a variety of methods (consensus building, multi-voting etc.)
• Rules and process are formal and strictly adhered to regardless of group opinion (i.e. no member can speak twice to an issue until all others have spoken once).	• Rules and process may be altered if the group agrees. Participation can be structured or unstructured.
• Often *dictate* process or the 'how' and 'when' content is brought to the table.	• *Suggest* process and seek ratification and/or possible changes from the group.
• Can create an adversarial environment by using rules that engender positionality.	• Use processes to get participants to shift from arguing a position to understanding broader, shared interests.
• Can express bias towards a point of view and express his/her opinion on what is and is not legitimate. S/he is therefore not perceived as being neutral.	• Does not get in to expressing personal ideas on content; is expected to be 'neutral' as demonstrated through body language, tone and words.
• Ideally ensures a democratic process in that ALL people are allowed to express their point of view if they get the floor.	• Is expected to foster opportunities for ALL people to express their opinion.
• Discussion items or 'motions' are not considered valid unless another member seconds them.	• Discussion items require group ratification to be on an agenda or they are 'parked' or taken off-line
• All remarks are directed to the Chair	• All remarks are directed to the group.
• Equal participation is not expected nor adhered to.	• Equal participation is always sought through various participation mechanisms
• Can, at will, terminate a meeting or agenda item without seeking the meeting participants' consent.	• Never terminates a meeting or agenda without seeking the meeting participants' consent.
• Is perceived as the major 'power' figure in the meeting.	• Is perceived as being there to help the group assert its own power.
• Process creates winners and losers; therefore some leave less committed to the meeting's outcomes.	• Process is geared to ensuring collaboration and a win: win for all members, resulting in higher commitment levels.

When to Chair Versus When to Facilitate

Chair when you want to …	*Facilitate* when you want to…
• Welcome all members and overview the meeting objectives and management and/or organizational expectations • Set the parameters around the discussion • Review past minutes and agenda items • Overview current agenda • Exchange information or lead a panel discussion • Hear members report back • Get informal feedback where hearing ALL voices is not important • Make sure your expertise on a subject matter will be heard when necessary	• Increase participation and ensure everyone has to chance to contribute • Shift ownership and commitment levels • Have members problem-solve • Deal with group dynamics • Facilitate an intervention that will improve meeting or team effectiveness • Get members to make decisions • Get members to create action plans • Leave the meeting content to participants, thus increasing buy-in • Use different processes (not just debating) for filtering down ideas