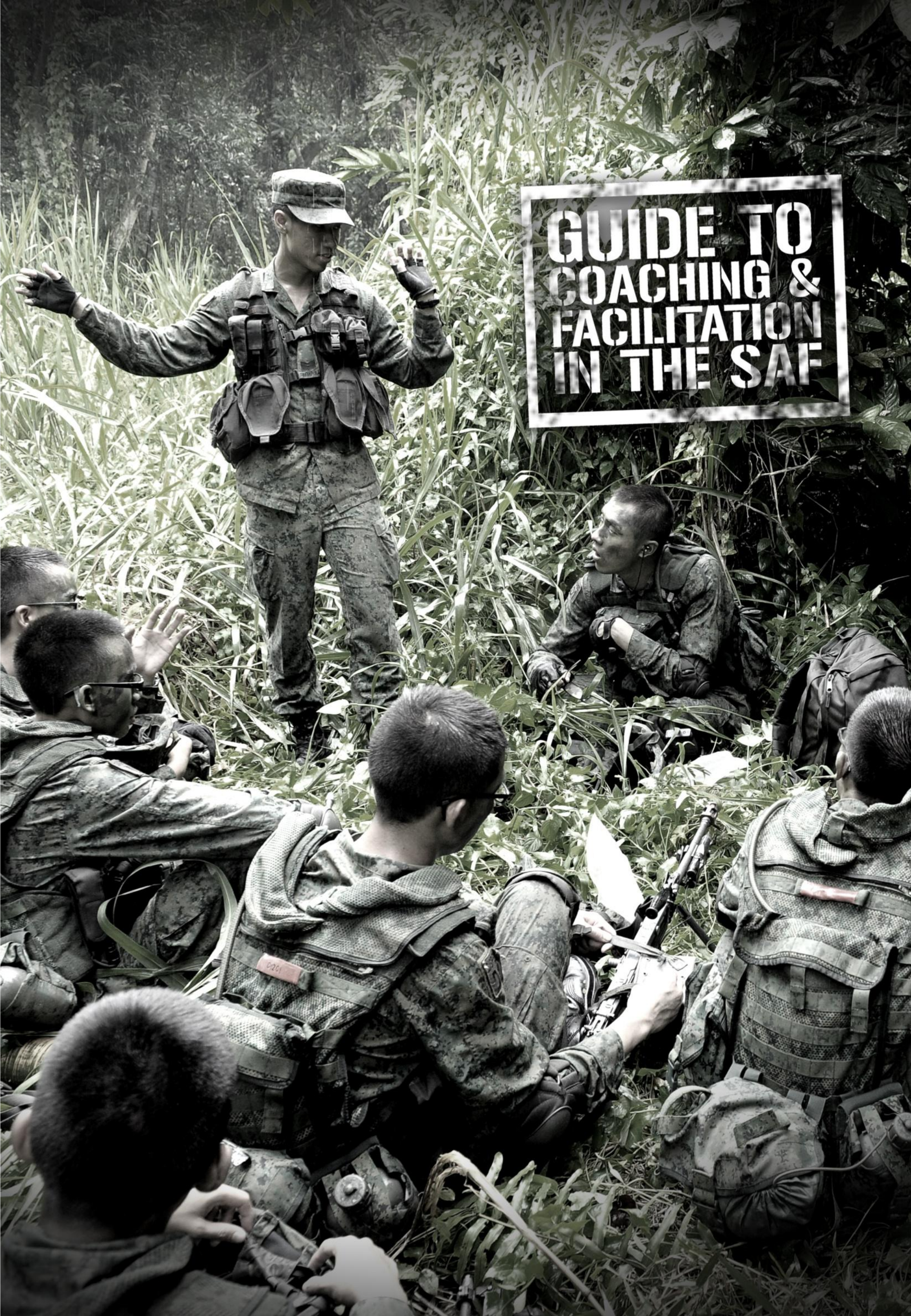
GUIDE TO COACHING & FACILITATION IN THE SAF



CLD

SAF CENTRE FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

TO LEAD · TO EXCEL · TO OVERCOME

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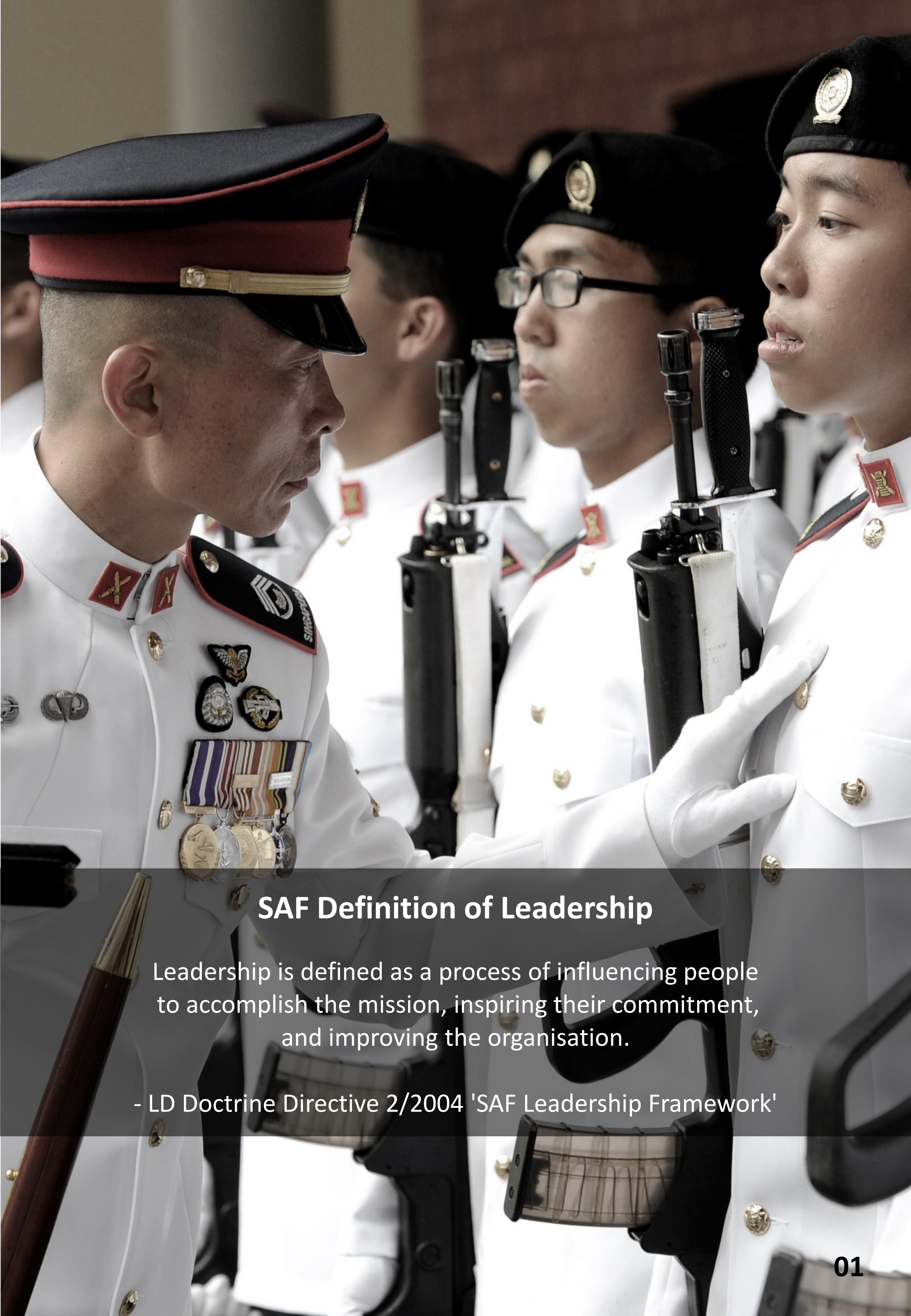


SAF Definition of Leadership

Leadership is defined as a process of influencing people to accomplish the mission, inspiring their commitment, and improving the organisation.

- LD Doctrine Directive 2/2004 'SAF Leadership Framework'

COACHING AND FACILITATION IN THE SAF

Leadership in the SAF is about influencing our soldiers to achieve mission success when taking on tasks in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environment, for the safety and sovereignty of Singapore. It is unique because leaders are required not only to 'get the job done', but also to constantly build and maintain their subordinates‘ ‘Commitment to Defence' and 'Will to Fight'.

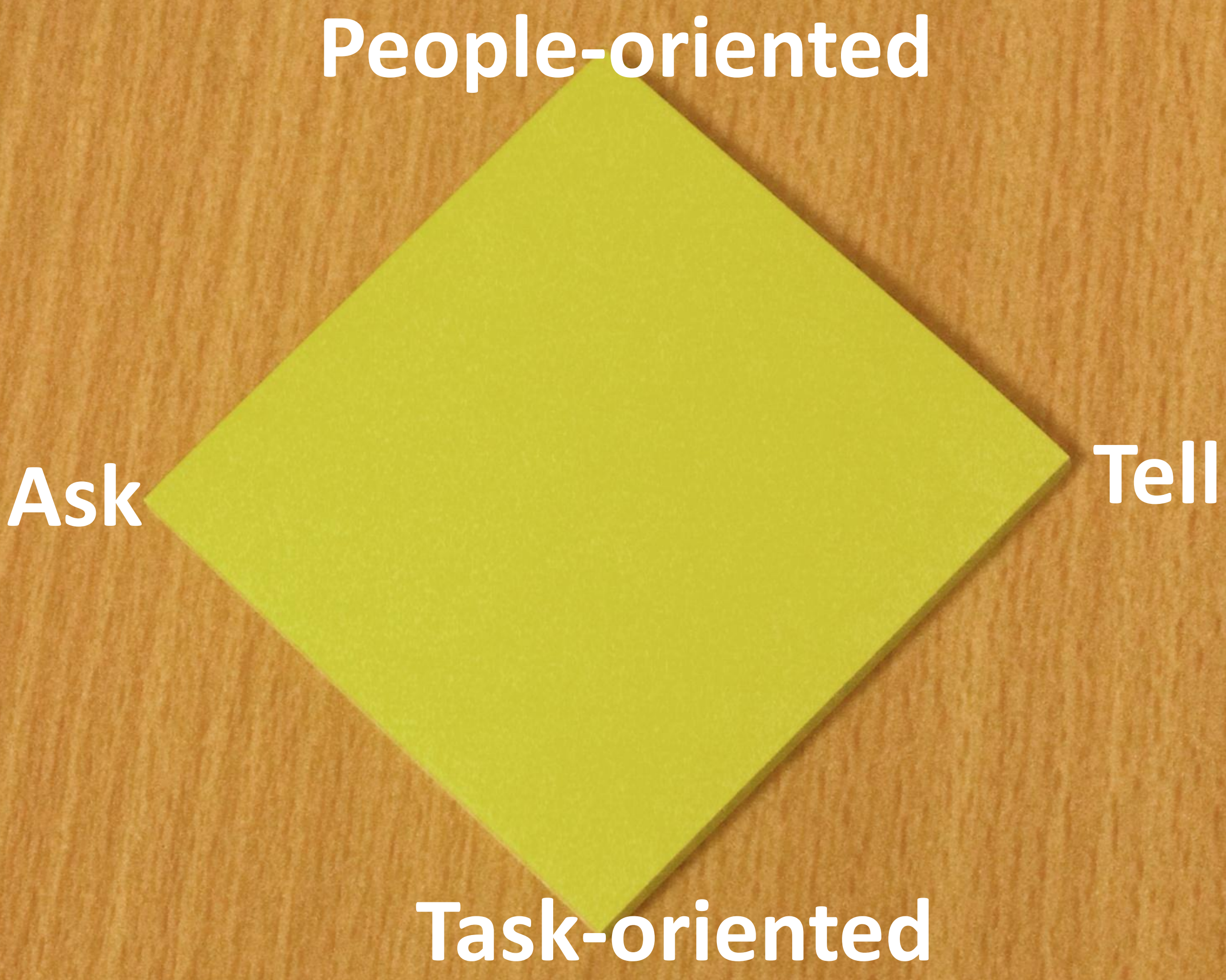
At the individual level, the expanded spectrum of Operations requires us to prepare all our soldiers, airmen and sailors to be more capable. Their effectiveness is contingent on them being able and willing to sense make, decide and act effectively. Coaching is key to developing these capabilities.

At the team level, there is a need to have alignment of values, purpose, and vision. A team must be able to conduct generative conversations in order to harness the strengths and diversity of individual members. Facilitation is key to ensuring this alignment and to raising the quality of collective thinking, collective actions and results.

In the SAF, a Leader takes on many roles – here are some of the more common ones related to developing our people:

- Mission Leader
- Disciplinarian
- Counsellor
- Mentor
- Teacher
- Coach
- Facilitator

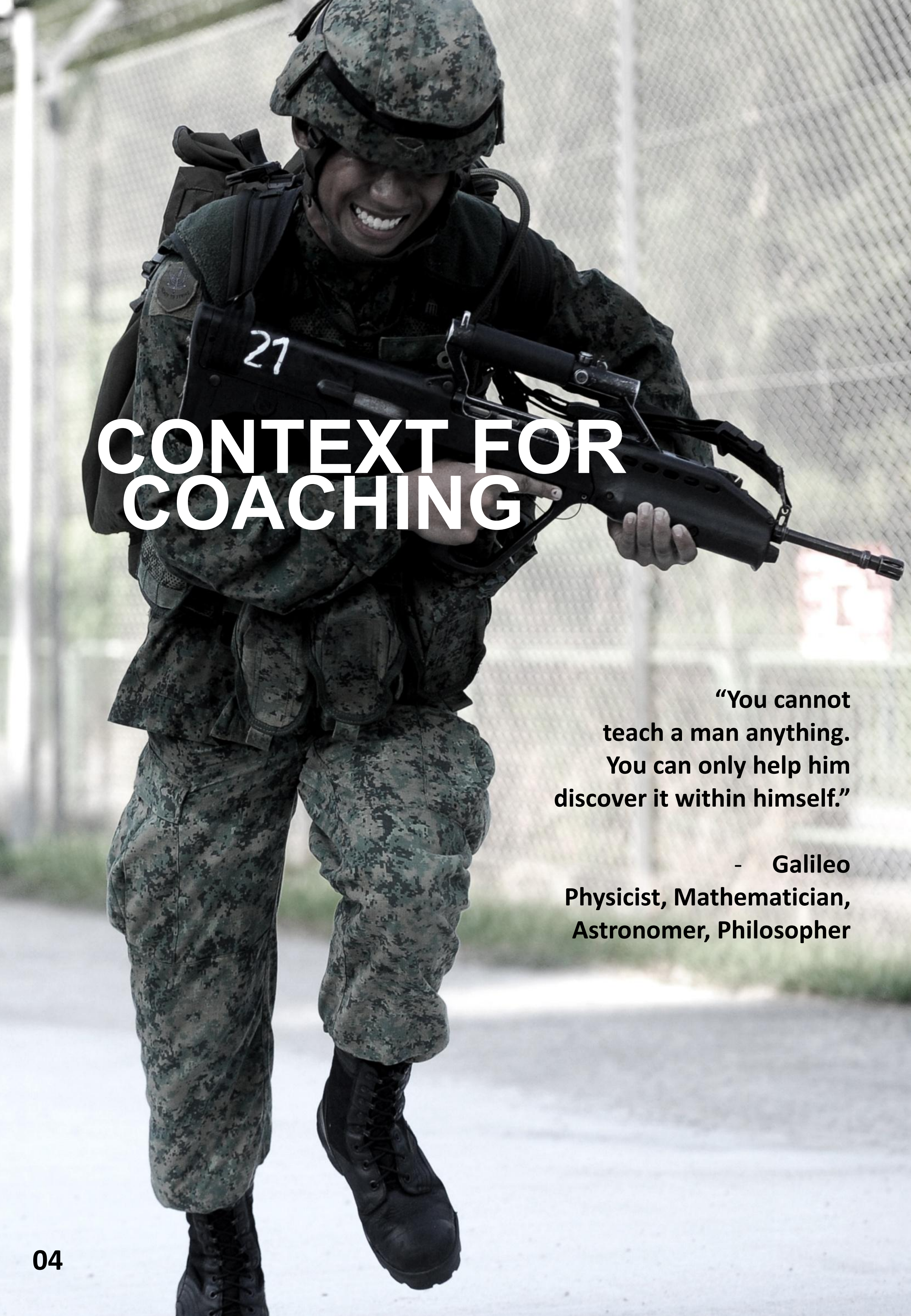
The default mode in hierarchical organisations is to tell - that is not wrong, and is essential in some circumstances. However that is not enough, because it limits the growth of the individual and the team. For each of these roles, should you be in an 'asking' or 'telling' mode? Should you be 'people-oriented' or 'task-oriented'? Write your answers in the diamond on the next page.



Your answers are, of course, contextualised to your circumstances and to the situations you had in mind. You will find that your answers demonstrate that a leader faces a spectrum of demands, and hence needs a spectrum of skills to handle those demands.

Our vision is that leaders know when to tell, when to ask, are able use advocacy and inquiry skills appropriately - to be good listeners, to be curious to clarify, as well as advocate their views from an informed position. These are components of Coaching and Facilitation practices which a Leader must have to improve the performance, learning and experience of his people individually and as a team.

We are not training SAF leaders to be professional coaches and facilitators. Rather, we are expanding your repertoire of conversation skills, as these are critical skills for influencing people, inspiring commitment and improving the organisation.



CONTEXT FOR COACHING

**"You cannot
teach a man anything.
You can only help him
discover it within himself."**

**- Galileo
Physicist, Mathematician,
Astronomer, Philosopher**

It is a leader's responsibility to develop his surbordinates, as individuals and as a team. One of the ways to develop our people is through regular coaching conversations. However, within the SAF, there are expectations of the Leader to TELL, as you hold a vast reservoir of operational experience, technical knowledge, authority and responsibility. The Leader, often labelled as a domain expert, will also feel the need to share experiences and give solutions. **While there are merits in sharing knowledge and experience, there will be circumstances where developing our subordinates mean guiding their thinking, for them to produce their own answers rather than giving them the solution.**

There is a difference between the role of a **Coach** and a **Mentor**, although both are roles used for development of our people. Here is a comparison of the roles:

	Coaching	Mentoring
Outcome	Coachees gain insights on a specific objective or goal, increased awareness through **their own thinking process**, as well as **feedback** on their behaviours.	Mentees gain insights on a specific objective or goal, increased awareness on possibilities by leveraging on **others' experience or knowledge**.
Process	The coach helps the coachee to focus on the goal by mirroring the coachee's thinking process and thoughts. The coach may also provide observation and feedback. In gist, the coach **"pulls the answer"** out of the coachee.	The mentor shares his experience as he has walked the same path and also shares options the mentee can take to achieve his professional goals. The mentor can point to new possibilities. In gist, the mentor "**opens possibilities**" for the mentee.
Qualities	The coach is **neutral and objective** in helping the coachee gain insights by asking questions to draw out his thinking process, giving feedback and highlighting the coachee's thinking process and thoughts for his awareness.	The mentor is someone who has '**been there**', or has **more knowledge** in the subject matter. He is also likely to be someone with a **wider network**, who can see connections or possibilities beyond the current scope.

Self-management
e.g. How can I better manage my time?

Career
e.g. What are my career aspirations? My posting preference?

Fitness
e.g How do I achieve my IPPT goal? How can I stick to my fitness regime?

Workplace
e.g. How can I work well with my colleagues / contractors?

Performance
e.g. How to perform well in my current appointment or project? How to get my proposal approved?

Personal Development
e.g. How can I communicate more effectively?

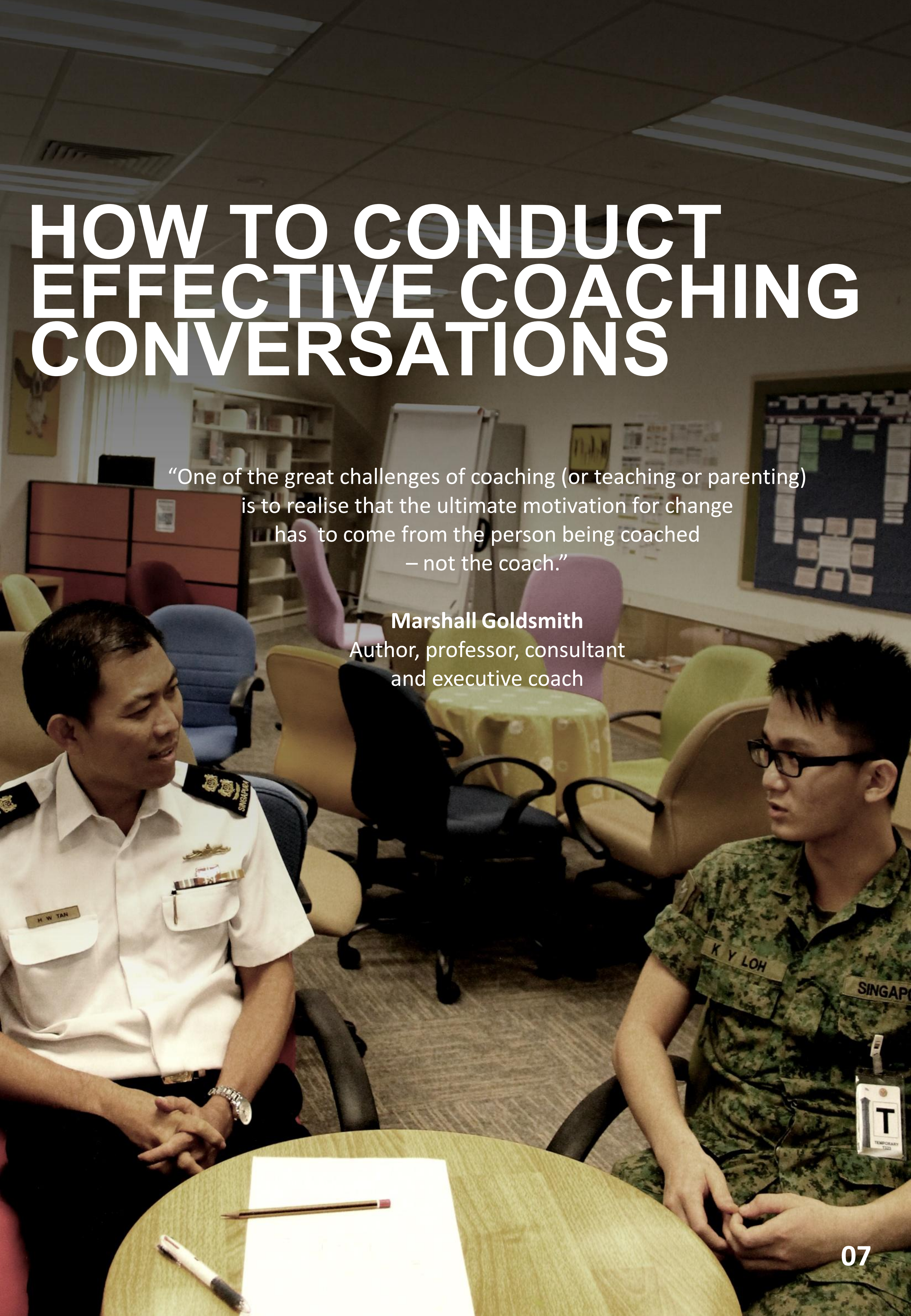
Coaching Topics

Your subordinates may come to you with a variety of coaching topics. The common topics are listed above.

HOW TO CONDUCT EFFECTIVE COACHING CONVERSATIONS

“One of the great challenges of coaching (or teaching or parenting) is to realise that the ultimate motivation for change has to come from the person being coached – not the coach.”

Marshall Goldsmith
Author, professor, consultant
and executive coach



Key Principles In Coaching Conversation

It is important that the coachee knows he is in a coaching conversation, as ownership of his own development is critical. Similarly, the coachee must decide or agree on the conversation topic, as he is the one acting on the follow-up. Remember, **we do not resist change, but we resist being changed.**

Key Principles in Coaching Conversations:

1. Be explicit that you are in a coaching conversation
2. Mutually agree on the conversation goal
3. Focus on the thinking of the coachee
4. Coachee owns the outcome and follow-up

At the start of the conversation, it is vital to build rapport with the coachee. The desired outcome of the session must be clear to both the coach and coachee, as well as determining the duration of the coaching session.

During the coaching conversation, the coach serves as a mirror to reflect the thinking of the coachee, by surfacing mental models and assumptions, seeking clarification and querying the norms, in order to help make connections so that the coachee can gain insights.

Starting the Coaching Conversation

To maximize the benefits of a coaching session, it is important to start off on a positive note. In order to achieve this, the Leader has to prepare adequately for the coaching conversations. The Leader should consider the following points in his preparation:

1. What do I want my coachee's experience to be?
2. How can I stay neutral? How can I coach rather than teach?
3. How will I know if the coaching conversation has been a success?

These questions may seem challenging, but the following simple pointers will help the Leader shape the coaching conversation so it is useful and meaningful:

1. Set up a safe and relaxed environment. A common way is to start by asking the coachee 'what's new (or exciting) in your life recently?'
2. Orientate the coachee to the purpose of the coaching conversation (e.g. 'I'm not here to provide the answer, but to guide you to an answer that works for you.')
3. Explore what the coachee would like to get out of the coaching conversation.

In the SAF, the **GROW model** is chosen as the structure for coaching conversation. It was developed in the 1980s by Graham Alexander and over the years has been widely adapted and practised within the coaching and managerial profession. GROW is a simple yet effective framework for structuring a coaching conversation. The GROW model helps to clarify objectives and thinking, identify options, reduce challenges to doable tasks, and thus increases one's belief, accountability and motivation in achieving a specific goal.

A guide to using the GROW model for coaching conversations:

	Purpose	**Sample questions**
Goal	Agree on Goals	What would you like to achieve over the long term? For today?
		Why is this important to you?
		On a scale of 1 to 10, how clear are you? Where would you like to be at the end of this session?
Reality	Appreciate the current reality	What is the situation now?
		What has worked / not worked?
		Is your goal still realistic?
Options	Examine Options	What possibilities can you think of?
		If you had the budget/time/information, what can you do?
		If you were your boss, how would you handle this?
What's next	Decide on what to do next	What will you do from here onwards?
		What challenges or obstacles might come your way?
		How will you know you have achieved your goal?

For effective coaching, THREE key skills are important:

1. Listening

The key success factor is the depth of listening, to be fully present to what's said and what's not said. In a typical conversations, our response usually begins to form well before others have finished speaking. One stops listening because one already has an answer. Thus, it is important to listen intently to see the deeper underlying meanings and assumptions in the coachee's train of thought.

2. Inquiry

The purpose of inquiry in a coaching conversation is to allow for the coachee to speak up, so that he surfaces and clarifies his thinking, leading to clear action steps after openly exploring possible options. The use of a neutral tone and open-ended questions are key, so that your coachee is encouraged to share his thoughts and examine his own mental models.

3. Advocacy (observation and feedback)

As a Leader, you can support your coachee through sharing of observation or feedback. These help him understand the impact of his actions and highlight blindspots that will improve his performance. Here are two common ways to provide feedback:

I. Situation-Behaviour-Impact (SBI). This was developed by the Center for Creative Leadership and is popular amongst coaches and managers. Instead of making judgment about a person's actions, the SBI is non-provocative and allows the recipient to reflect from the perspective of those impacted.

S – Describe Situation
B – Describe Behaviour
I – Describe Impact

E.g. "During the meeting yesterday, you did not answer Thomas' questions, but carried on with your presentation. As a fellow participant, I felt that a valid question was overlooked. It made me question my contribution as an audience."

The key point about SBI is that it is *impact-based,* rather than accusation-based ("you always ignore others and show disrespect").

II. Sandwich Feedback. This is another popular feedback There are three steps: 1. Provide a positive comment or observation, 2. Follow up by highlight a possible area for improvement, and 3. Conclude with either another positive comment, or an overall positive observation. Thus the sandwich feedback method involves discussing corrective feedback that is "sandwiched" between two layers of praise.

While this framework reported softens the impact of the constructive criticism, there are concerns that before too long, your coachee will get weary of your compliments, thinking you are just 'softening the ground for the bad news'. So use this sparingly!

Recommended Coaching Tools

This section contains a set of coaching tools which practitioners in the SAF have found useful. They are by no means exhaustive, but are shared in the spirit of widening one's repertoire. The Leader may choose to adopt and adapt where appropriate.

Coaching Tool #1 - The Scale

What is it?

The scale is a **visual tool for goal setting** to be done. It provides for the coachee to have a sense of where he/she is in the present state and look forward to the desired state. It also represents some form of measurement on how far one is from his desired end-state or goal.

When and how to use it?

This tool can be used at any point in the coaching conversation. At the start of the coaching conversations, you can use the scaling tool to check with your coachee on where he is on the coaching topic. For example, if your coachee is seeking clarity on how to execute a project, you might ask "On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you now in terms of knowing what to do?", followed by "Where would you like to be at the end of this session?". At the end of the session, check with the coachee if indeed he has achieved this – this provides a good check on the usefulness of the session.

Possible Questions to ask with the use of the scale:

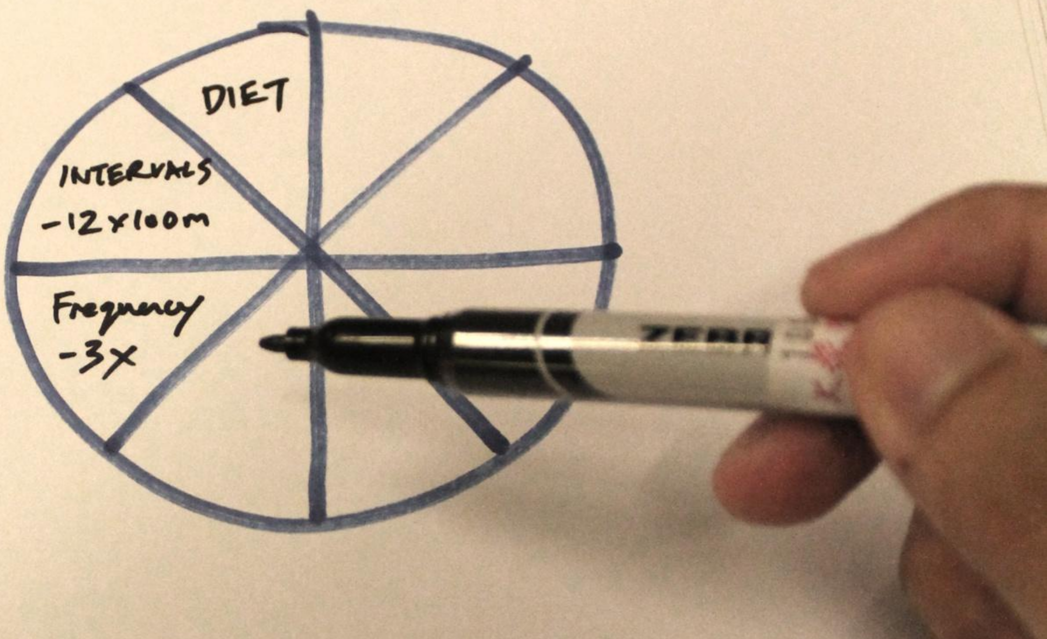
You may ask your Direct Report:
- On a scale of 1 to 10, where are you now?
- Where would you like to be?
- What are the steps you can take to move yourself from a 4 to a 7?

Coaching Tool #2 - The Wheel

What is it?

It is a tool to brainstorm on options, and to examine each option.

When and how to use it?



The wheel is used to list the options in which your coachee is already tackling in a project or issue. While he may not have eight different ways, as a Coach, you push him to think of other ways in tackling the project/issue. Then, get your coachee to rate (on a scale of 1 to 10), the effectiveness of each option, followed by the amount of effort he is putting in each option. This often enables the coachee to see whether he has put his energy on the right leverage areas. This sets the stage for further conversation on action planning.

For example, when coaching a Direct Report on passing his IPPT 2.4km run, you can first focus on asking him what has he been doing. Then, focus on what else he might do, in ensuring he meets the goal set for passing the IPPT 2.4km run. This is when you can further push his thinking, on possibilities. Finally, you can get him to rate the effectiveness of each strategy, and get him to see where his effort has been focused on.

Coaching Tool #3 - Stakeholder Perspectives

This tool is mainly used for **project planning and review**. First, get your coachee to list down as many stakeholders he/she thinks are involved in this project. Get him/her to write each stakeholder down on a separate sheet of paper.

Stakeholder #1

Stakeholder #4

Direct Report/ Coachee

Stakeholder #2

Stakeholder #3

Then, get him/her to "step into the perspective" of each stakeholder as identified, to think about what this stakeholder might:

1. Expect from this project
2. Ask about this project
3. Benefit from this project

Then, get your coachee to step back into his/her own perspective, and ask himself/herself:

1. How might I meet this stakeholder's expectations?
2. What might be some challenges?
3. How might I create a win-win situation?

Repeat this process for each stakeholder identified. It is important to remind your coachee to step back into his/her own perspective before moving on to a different stakeholder.

Coaching Tool #4 – Dreamer-Realist-Critic Planning

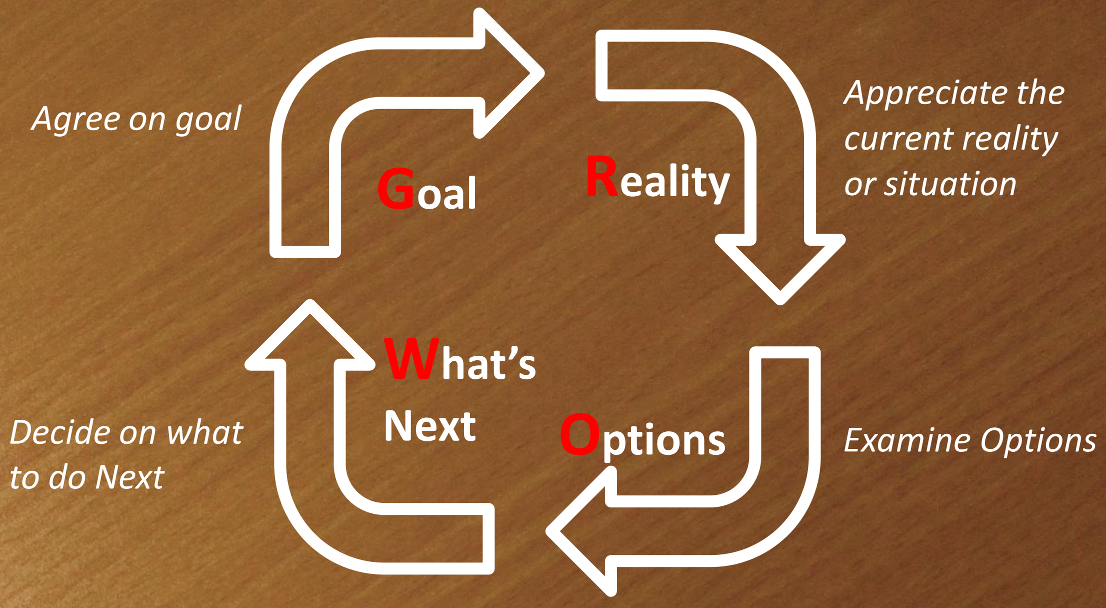
This tool is mainly used for **visioning/ project development**. Like the stakeholder's exercise, there are **3 stages** you can get your coachee to step into - *Dreamer, Realist, Critic*.

As a **Dreamer**, he/she thinks of the ideal vision that he/she has in mind for the project. Prompt your coachee to think of all the possibilities and value that this project might bring to the organisation. Get your coachee to visualise that successful image.

As a **Realist**, he/she examines the steps required to complete the project.

As a **Critic**, he/she thinks of the different stakeholders involved in the project and asks what works or doesn't work for them in the plan. This usually prompts him/her to relook at his/her plans in executing the vision/project.

Alternate between Dreamer-Realist and Critic-Realist, to ensure both pull and push factors are satisfactorily handled by the Realist. Remember, the Realist is ultimately the one who executes the project, thus it is the key 'link' in this tri-partite planning tool!



GROW Model

CONCLUSION

Coaching conversations are most effective when the coachee feels in control. He will have greater belief and commitment in the goals and solutions, because they come from him. In addition, the will experience being listened to and will appreciate the effort put in by the Leader to understand him. This builds openness and trust.

More importantly, the value you can provide as a coach is to focus on his thinking, not on his solution. It is the proverbial 'teaching him to fish', rather than 'giving him a fish'. Throughout the conversation, you are listening out for underlying beliefs and assumptions, for logic and realistic assessment of the situation, and for clarity of purpose and commitment. It is both an art and a science – and you can only get better with practice!

THE SAF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

A Systematic Approach to Coaching

The SAF Individual Development Process (IDP) is established as a systematic and disciplined approach to developing an individual. The overall intent is to structure an individual's progression through different learning and knowledge tracks. It focuses on development and is strictly not for assessment and appraisal. It emphasizes the importance of experiential learning at the workplace to reinforce previous learning in the schoolhouse.

The benefits of the IDP are:

1. Ensuring that learning is relevant, for the individual and to the unit and to SAF.
2. Motivating and inspiring subordinates to learn, and to take ownership of their learning.
3. Helping supervisors focus support and resources on the learning needs of subordinates to create opportunities for self-learning and development.
4. Helping subordinates develop skills which will enhance their ability to manage changing situations and changing needs in the future.

The IDP Timeline:

The following is a recommended timeline of how the IDP should **begin when an individual is newly posted to his/her unit until the time he/she completes the tour.** A systematic approach is adopted to inculcate and reinforce the principles and intent of the independent learning process eschewed by the IDP through the phases identified as “Buy in & enrolment”, “Discovering Identity & Purpose”, “Role & Goal Clarity” and “Choice & “Commitment”.

IDP Timeline

Within 7 days of posting	*Within 3 weeks*	*Within 6 weeks*	*Within 9 weeks*	*12th week onwards*	
Posting In	Buy-in & Enrolment	Identity & Purpose	Role & Goal Clarity	Choice & Commit-ment	End of Tour
- Supervisor establishes intent - Brief on job requirements	1st Coaching Conversation - Clarify unit mission & purpose - Clarify job expectations	2nd Coaching Conversation - Identify goals - Discuss challenges & opportunities for learning	3rd Coaching Conversation - Discuss development plan & guide draft IDAP	Subsequent coaching conversations - Coaching on each goal/issue	

IDP Supervisor & Subordinate Roles and Responsibilities:

The effectiveness of the IDP as a developmental tool is highly dependent on it being used **regularly and consistently**. The IDP is designed to be portable – the process follows the career path of a serviceman/woman as he/she transits from one unit to another. This is imperative as the value of the IDP lies in its continuity in tandem with the career path of that individual serviceman/woman. As such there should be a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities of supervisors to ensure its regular and consistent use. More details can be found in the 'Guide to IDP in the SAF'.

Subordinate

1. Think about what developmental gaps exist in his/her current appointment, and how to overcome these challenges through learning opportunities.
2. Frame his/her **performance** and **personal goals**.
3. Set goals and objectives that are applicable to the organisation and to himself/herself.
4. Identify and discuss with his/her supervisor ways of meeting career aspirations and enhancing performance.

Supervisor

1. Be familiar with the process and purpose to guide the learning and development of subordinates.
2. Conduct a coaching session **within 3 weeks** of an individual’s initial posting to the unit.
3. Commit to conducting **scheduled coaching conversation every 3 months**, using the GROW coaching techniques to build understanding, increase clarity and lay clear expectations between supervisor and subordinate.
4. Guide the subordinate in developing his/her IDAP based on the coaching conversation, and highlight the importance of organisational goals.
5. Review and discuss the subordinate’s strengths and areas for improvement with regards to current work tasks.

"In dialogue, a group explores complex difficult issues from many points of view… The result is a free exploration that brings to the surface the full depth of people's experience and thought, and yet can move beyond their individual views."

- Peter Senge, in "The Fifth Discipline"

CONTEXT FOR FACILITATION

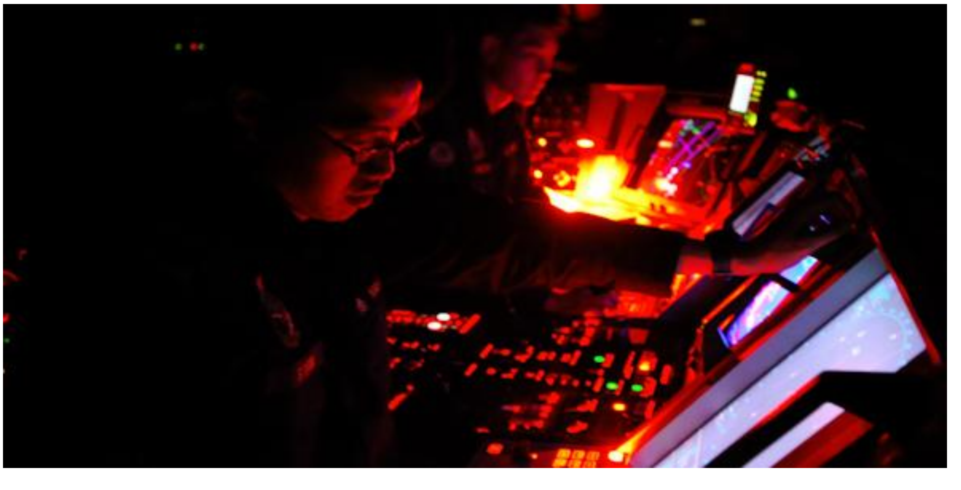
Facilitation is the practice to create effective team conversations by systematically harnessing the collective and diverse perspectives of the team through a myriad of skills, tools and methodologies, to converge for the outcomes of team learning, positive experience and collective action for mission success.

In order to lead and command more effectively in a VUCA environment, Leaders need to facilitate generative conversations to draw out diverse perspectives from members, to align Values, purpose and vision, to create collaboration for effective team learning and action. Through such dialogues, the leader builds commitment of his team, help them gain insights, and ensure achievement of shared goals.

Facilitation is useful when:

1. there is diverse expertise and perspectives within the team,
2. part or the whole team is new to the topic or issue,
3. there is a need for alignment,
4. it is important to build shared situation understanding,
5. the tempo and time in training and operations allows for it.

Just like in coaching, there is often an unspoken expectation that Leaders are more knowledgeable than their followers, and thus the need for leaders to tell is compelling. With that, subordinates may feel obliged to be good followers and thus keep differing perspective to themselves. This is not helpful when these differing perspectives may be important in the decision making process. Thus, leaders need to balance the need to seek perspectives and to tell. One approach might be to first seek perspectives, before providing the expertise and experience by deciding and directing.



As a Leader in the SAF, there are many scenarios or topics for facilitation. The common scenarios are:

Creating a Vision

Where the Leader wishes to identify the vision for his unit, or for a project. An example is ‘Review of Ops Roles’ or ‘Reframing mental models about safety’.

Team Goal-setting

Where the Leader wishes to identify a series of goals relating to a project or a vision. This may be in the context of Action Learning Process (ALP), where during Before Activity Review, the unit is required to identify learning goals for his team.

Team Building

Where the Leader wishes to build his team effectiveness and alignment through appreciating the diversity, clarification of vision, roles, rules and relationships (V3R).

Consolidation of Learning

Where the Leader wishes to consolidate learning or insight. This may be in the context of Post-Activity-Review (PAR) in ALP.

Meetings

An estimated 20% or more of the Leader’s time is spent in meetings. Thus, if facilitative methods are used, Leaders may be able to get more diverse perspectives out of meetings to make more informed decisions as a Leader.

Team Action Planning/ Problem Solving

Where the Leader wishes to craft a strategy or action plan to achieve a vision, mission or resolve a problem.

HOW TO FACILITATE EFFECTIVELY

"Information is a source of learning. But unless it is organised, processed, and available to the right people in a format for decision-making, it is a burden, not a benefit."

- **William G. Pollard**
Physicist, Author

Key Principles In Facilitation

It is important to set clear objectives for the facilitated session, including time allocation and roles/ responsibilities of the individuals in the team. Some of the considerations are:

1. Be explicit with your role in the conversation (e.g. Decision maker, facilitator)
2. Set clear objectives for the conversation
3. Focus on gathering diverse perspectives before converging on a conclusion or decision
4. Ensure that the key points of the conversation are summarised clearly

Phases of Facilitation

In Facilitation, there are **three** main stages:

1. **Preparation**
2. **Delivery**
3. **Post-Activity Review**

Preparation

At the Preparation stage, you will need to consider the following:

- What is the intent of this facilitated session?
- Who are your participants, who else might benefit from this session?
- Where is the meeting/ facilitated session held? Is it most conducive for the session?
- What logistics do I require in setting up a conducive environment for facilitation?
- Do I need to be assisted by a co-facilitator?
- How might I be recording the key points of discussion and decisions? Who might help me with that?

Delivery

At the delivery stage, it is important to ensure that instructions about the processes are clearly articulated and visible to the participants of the session. It is also crucial to explain the rationale and intent of each segment so that participants understand and know what is expected of them. Typically, there will be a divergent phase in the delivery to collect ideas and/or hear diverse perspectives. Then, the session might converge to decision making or development of action plans.

Post-Activity Review

As a facilitator, practice makes perfect! Thus, it is always important to do a Post Activity Review after each facilitated session to enhance the quality of your facilitation.

You may reflect on these questions:

- What went well? (Preparation and Delivery of the session)
- What could have been done differently?
- What might be my goal/ focus area for my next facilitated session?
- What new tools must I seek out to enhance the session ?

Setting Up An Environment For Generative Conversations

(Adapted from Lucas, R.W. (2003). The Creative Training Idea Book)

Lighting arrangements

The environment in which the facilitation takes place should be in an environment that is bright. It is best that the rooms have natural lighting, so open the curtains as much as possible to allow natural lighting into the room. This is helpful to increase the level of alertness in a person especially if the discussion will take more than two hours.

Furniture and Seating Arrangements

It is important to pay attention to the comfort level of the group members, so that they are in a right frame to stay alert and contribute to the discussion. Hence, the facilitator may want to ensure that seats are ergonomically friendly or have a backing for group members to be comfortable. To facilitate open discussion and to allow all group members to be inclusive, getting the group members to arrange themselves in a circle or U-shaped arrangement would be ideal.

Room size

The overall appearance and aesthetics make a strong mental impact that can affect the motivation of the participant to learn. Hence, it is important to ensure that the room is also large enough to accommodate the number of people in the activities and conversation. This is to ensure that participants have enough space to move about and to accommodate access to possible learning materials around the room.

Working with Flipcharts

- Use bold colours and flat-tip markers whenever possible to ensure that writing on the flipchart is visible

- Record or write what is said exactly

- Use complete sentences with verbs, and ask permission to change words, or if you decide to record in point form, do check with the others if they are agreeable

- Hang up completed flipcharts to display, to support group memory and to keep conversation generative

- Roll up flipcharts when packing them so that they can be pasted up again without creases on the flipchart so that they can be used again for subsequent sessions if necessary

The Process Of Delivering A Facilitated Session

These are key steps in delivering a facilitated session:

1. Introduce yourself and welcome participants. You should be explicit about the roles and responsibility of each member, including yourself.

2. Walk through the Ground Rules for the facilitated session, and reinforce that all members need to abide by these rules so that generative conversations can take place. Here's the set of ground rules that SAF Centre for Leadership Development (CLD) use:

- One conversation at all times
- Listen to understand
- Suspend judgment
- Ask questions to clarify
- Surface assumptions

3. Clearly communicate the purpose and agenda for the session.

4. As you go through each item on the agenda, ensure that you seek perspectives from as many individuals as you can.

5. Provide your perspective only after seeking perspectives from the rest of the members.

6. Attempt to connect the dots for your team, synthesise information as the discussion flows and make these insights explicit. Help your team gain insights and learn.

7. Summarise the key points of discussion for each agenda item.

8. As the Leader, you will be the decision maker. It is important to seek out as much information and many perspectives from your team so that you can make decisions from an informed position. Record the decisions. Then ask yourself: How do I ensure that the key points and decisions made are captured for future reference?

As a facilitator, the key skills are:

1. Listening

As a facilitator, you may be hearing underlying assumptions or beliefs that may not be explicit. Thus, it is important to listen intently to be able to see the deeper underlying meanings and surface them where necessary to help the team move forward or gain insights.

2. Inquiry

The purpose of inquiry in a facilitated session is to ensure that questions are asked to test assumptions, invite participation, gather information and probe for further information. Effective questioning is key to delve past the symptoms to get into root causes.

3. Advocacy

As a Leader, your role will be to play a mirror to your team. As such, you will need to paraphrase or reflect back the key information that your team is surfacing, so as to remind them of the key information and trigger for further clarifications or insights.

4. Summarisation

An effective facilitator can listen to a set of complex ideas and offer a concise and timely summary. Summaries can also be used to revive a discussion or to end one that needs to be wrapped up. Summary can also help a group to arrive at a consensus or decision.

Recommended Facilitation Tools

This section contains a set of facilitation tools which practitioners in the SAF have found useful. They are by no means exhaustive, but are shared in the spirit of widening one's repertoire. The Leader may choose to adopt and adapt where appropriate. Some of them have been highlighted to illustrate the steps required to use the tool.

Divergent Tools

- Brainwriting
- Brainstorming
- Open Space Technology
- Post-it Writing
- Wandering Flipchart
- Ambassadorial Sharing
- Small Group Discussion + Presentation
- The World Cafe
- Force Field Analysis

Convergent Tools

- Decision Matrix
- Clustering + Headlining
- Voting
- One-Man decide
- Consensus
- (Majority/ 100%)

Facilitation Tool #1 - Clustering % Headlining

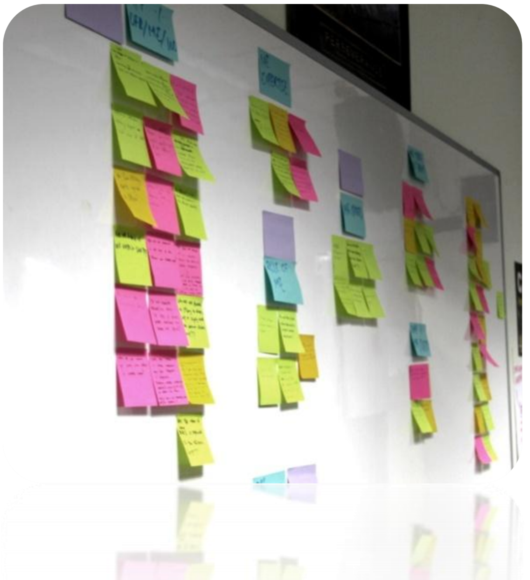
This tool can help to bring about **team goal-setting**. The main idea is to have a bottom-up approach in harnessing the goals of the individuals (divergence) and then to synergise into team goals (convergence), with consideration of the mission intent and Leader's guidance.

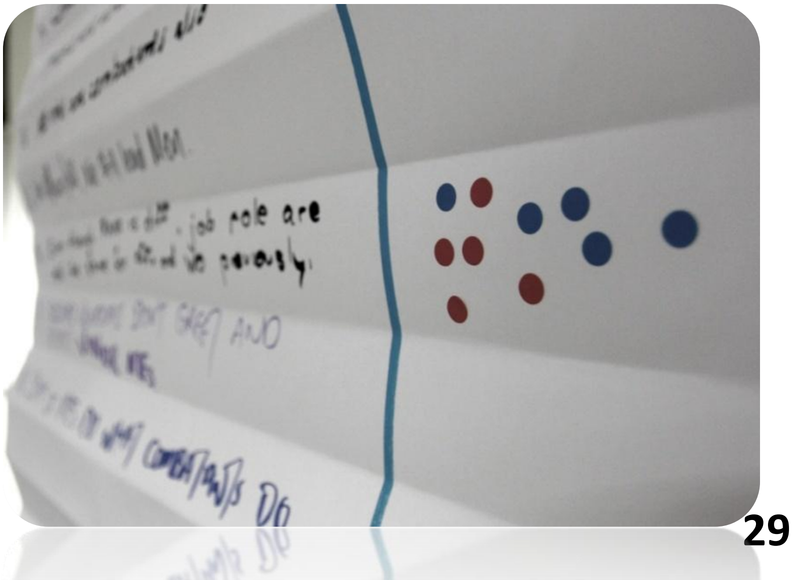
Intent: Divergence and Convergence tool, usually done to discover patterns or commonality in thoughts/ ideas. Powerful in acknowledging team contribution and enhancing ownership, as all contribution are considered.
Group Size: No more than 30, min. of 10

Guidelines:
1. One idea or goal per card
2. Clear statements in no more than 8 words (Be specific!)
3. Write legibly and in bold colours

• Choose one person to present his idea or goal, then past it on a board/ sticky wall (use spray mount) - paste the idea/ goal on the left side of the sticky wall, nearer tothe top.
• Ask those with similar ideas/ goals to paste their post-it/ sheets directly below the first one that was presented.
• Pick anyone who has another idea/ goal to present. Repeat Step 3.
• Continue until all the ideas/ goals have been pasted up.
• Get participants to label each category of post-its/ sheets - these represent the idea pattern or common goal (Headlining)
• If there is a need to prioritize the ideas/ goals, do dot-voting!

Dot Voting Guidelines:
• Each participant is given X dots (we recommended 1/3 to 1/2 of the number of options. For example, if you have 10 options, give each participants 3 to 4 votes.)
• Participants to read all options first, then place their dots to vote
• Leaders and influential participants to vote last
• Total the dots for each Label to see the prioritised list of ideas





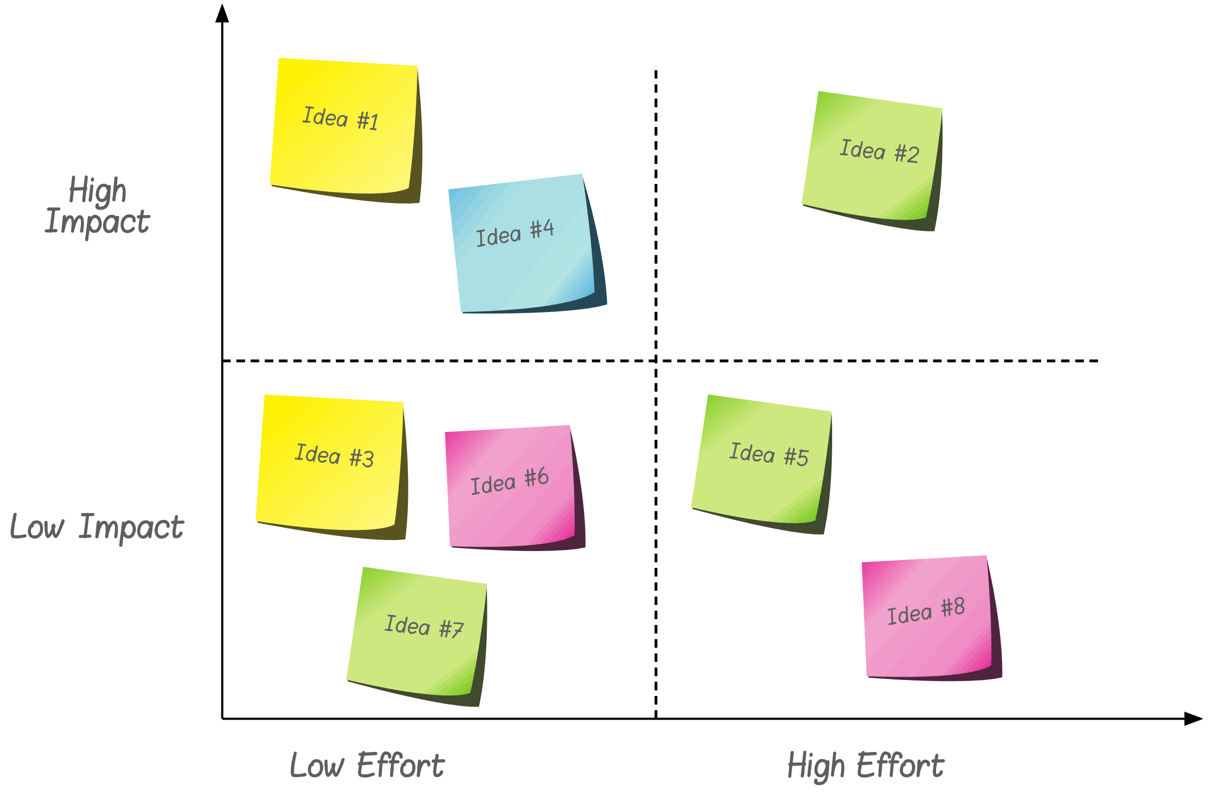
Facilitation Tool #2 -Decision Matrix

This tool is useful for **prioritisation of ideas/ strategies** for action planning and problem solving.

Intent: Convergence Tool, usually done to compare factors on pre-determined criteria. Ensures that each factor is fairly and objectively judged against the same set of criteria.

Group Size: No more than 30, min. of 10

- Decide on the criteria for factors to be measured against - e.g. 2 x 2
- State clearly for the participants what the axis represent, note the direction of the criteria
- Seek agreement on which quadrant would the chosen one where the ideas will be worked on in terms of further building actions plans
- Based on the generated ideas/ strategies/ goals, seek participants' view on which quadrant should it be placed at
- Focus on the ideas/ goals/ solutions on the "chosen" quadrant (e.g. you would want to focus on ideas that fall into the quadrant of low effort and high impact)
- Use your expertise and knowledge to guide if the team is moving in a positive way
- Proceed to plan follow-up actions on each of the ideas/ goals/ solutions



Facilitation Tool #3 -Ambassador Sharing

This tool is useful for **consolidation of perspectives/ learning**.

Intent: Convergence Tool, used to allow for cross-fertilization of learning among different groups.

Group size: No more than 50, min. of 10

1. Sit in the functional groups first, to clarify and summarise the group's learning, ensure that the learning is explicitly recorded on a flipchart or ppt slide to brief others
2. Appoint an Ambassador for the group, to share and seek inputs from other members who will "travel" to him. The rest of the group members are "travellers".
3. Invite the "travellers" to move clockwise, to the next group, Ambassador stays put
4. Ambassadors will meet a group of travellers from another group. He then starts briefing them on the learning points and seek inputs from these "travellers" on their experiences, observations, and knowledge
5. If each group consists of 6 pax or less, allow 20 mins for each round. The time allocation should increase if the group is large.
6. Repeat until the "travellers" rejoin their Ambassador as a group.
7. Allow time for the Ambassadors to share the inputs he has amassed from other travellers to his group members and to further crystalise the learning for the group
8. Depending on the outcome of the session, you may want to invite each group to formulate strategies or follow up actions

Facilitation Tool #4 -Wandering Flipchart

This tool is useful for **gathering of ideas/ feedback** for creating a vision for a project, or to collect ideas on several topics.

Intent: Divergence Tool, to collect learning/ideas from everyone on specific topics (represented by a flipchart, i.e. one topic one flipchart).

Group size: No more than 40, min. of 8

1. Seek consensus on the chosen topics of discussion (e.g. to gather feedback on what went well, what did not go so well etc.)
2. Write each topic on a flipchart (one topic per flipchart)
3. Get everyone to contribute their perspectives/ learning onto each topic
4. Assign someone to be at each flipchart to present a summary of the points written down and to facilitate any clarification on the points surfaced 5. The facilitator (or the Leader) to summarise at the end of the session the salient learning points.

Facilitation Tool #5 -The World Café

This is a popular process used in workplan retreats to generate discussions on topics that are important.

Intent: To generate discussions on meaningful topics and to summarise the key ideas for further action planning.

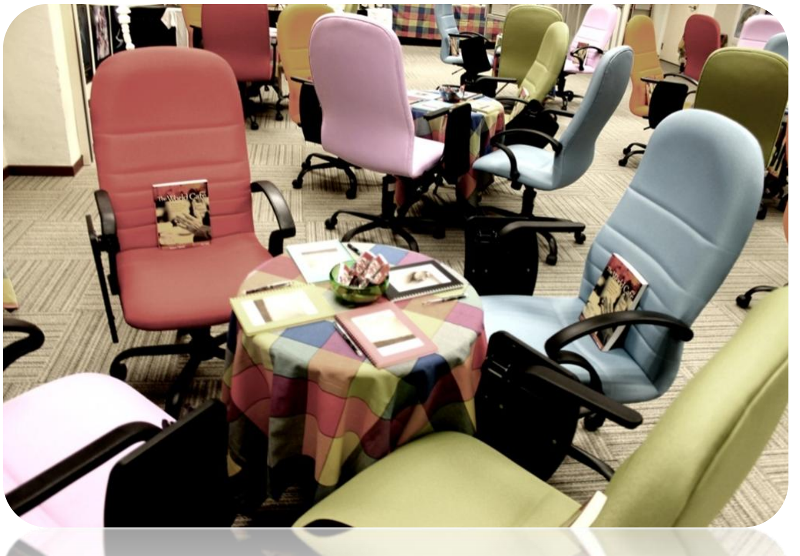
Group Size: More than 12 pax

The key process you will need to attend to is the creation of the questions used to generate conversations amongst the participants. Criteria for the questions could range from vision to action planning, past to future, etc. Typically, three questions will be generated for discussion.

The key steps to facilitating The World Café are:

1. Split the participants into groups of 4 to 6.
2. Appoint a Table Host. The role of the table host is to harness perspectives, summarise and record the discussion.
3. Show Question #1 to all, as the focusing question for this round of conversation.
4. Each round of discussion typically takes 20 minutes.
5. After the first round, invite the rest of the table members (only Table Host remains at the table) to move to other tables.
6. Table host to ensure that he presents the summary to his new group of participants before he facilitates the conversation based on Question #2.
7. After completing 3 rounds of conversations, table hosts will present to the large group a summary of all three questions.
8. Alternatively, summaries to the large group can be presented at the end of each round of conversation.

For more information, visit <www.theworldcafe.com>

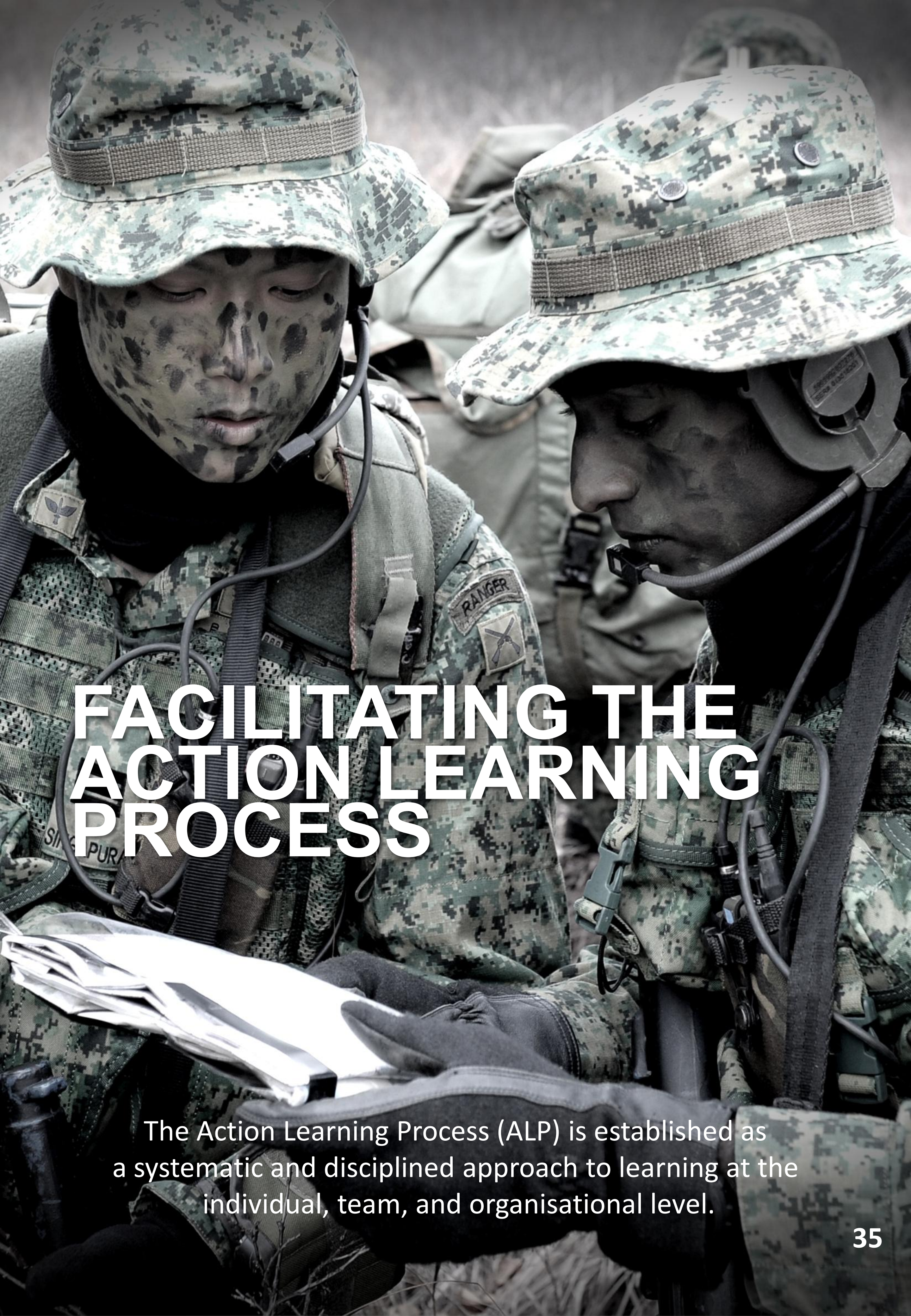


Facilitation Tool #6 - Round Robin Feedback

This tool is useful specifically for team members to provide feedback to each other in an anonymous way. This is a popular process at team reviews and unit retreats.
Intent: To provide an opportunity for team members to provide feedback to each other in a safe, non-attributable way.

Group Size: Any number

Steps:
1. Form small groups (4-8 pax), preferrably members who work closely with each other and interact on a frequent basis. Sit in a circle.
2. Each person is given an envelope and writes his/her name on the envelope.
3. Each person then passes the envelope to the person on the right.
4. The person who receives the envelope looks at the name, then writes feedback for that person on a piece of paper, then insert into the envelope. For example, B is holding an envelope that has A's name on it. B will write feedback for A, then slip it into envelope marked A.
(A variation can be writing positive feedback on yellow paper, feedback for improvement on pink paper.)
5. Pass the envelope to the next person, and the process continues from step 4. Continuing the example above, B passes A's envelope to C, for C to provide feedback to A.
6. After the envelope has gone one round, each person receives back his own envelope, with feedback for himself. He will read and reflect, and write down either notes for improvement or clarifying questions. Depending on the team dynamics, the team can either reply directly or add on to the feedback provided.

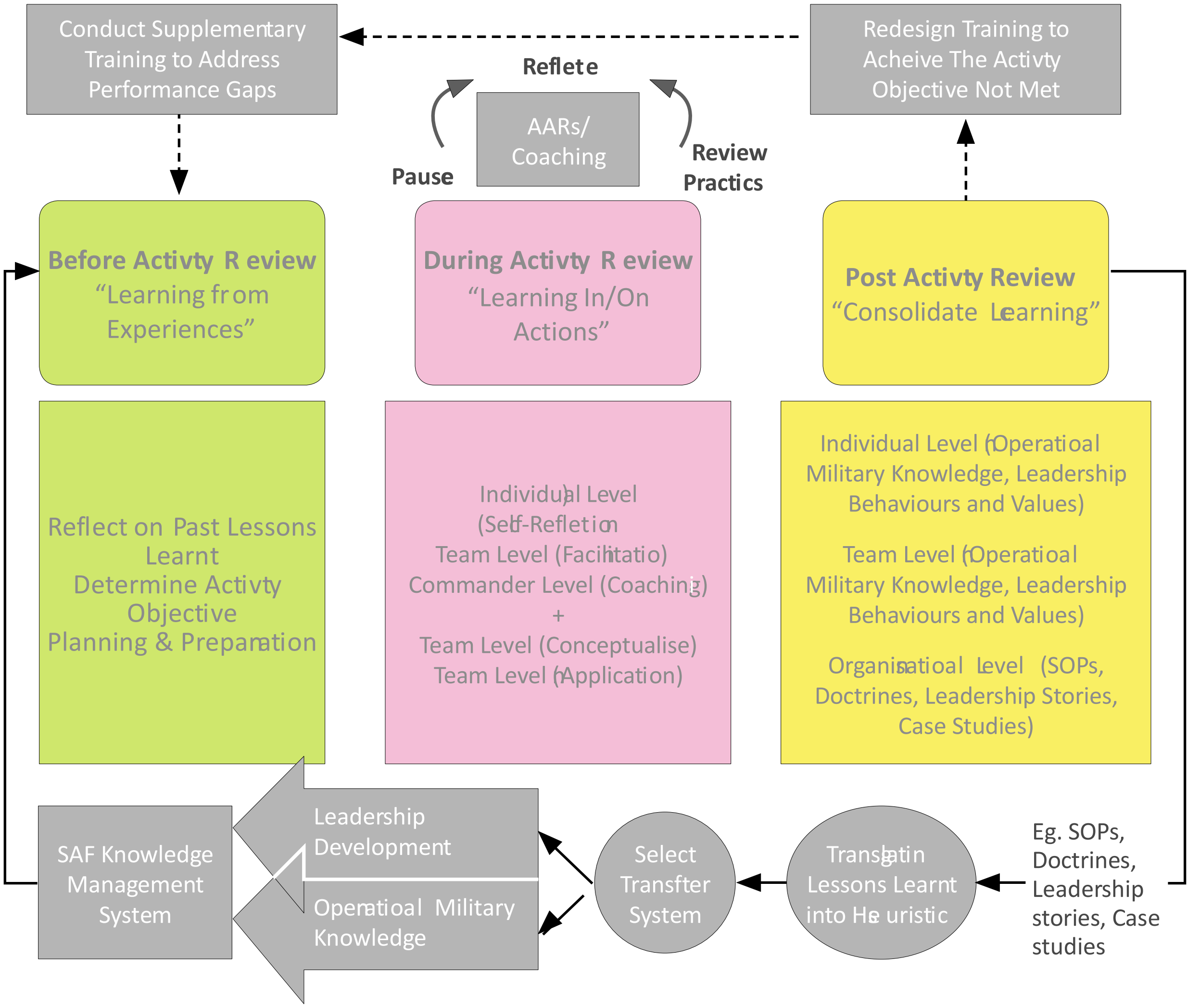


FACILITATING THE ACTION LEARNING PROCESS

The Action Learning Process (ALP) is established as a systematic and disciplined approach to learning at the individual, team, and organisational level.

There are 3 components of the ALP that require facilitation by the leader. They are the **Before Activity Review (BAR)** session with the team, the **During Activity Review (DAR)** during the activity, and the **Post Activity Review (PAR)** session with the team.

Do note that being a designer of ALP, and facilitating the components of the ALP are different. As a designer, you will need to consider the structure and time for people to learn. As a facilitator, you will need to focus on making sure that conversations are generative, and that learning is taking place. Thus, while harnessing the insights and perspectives from team members are important, summarising the key points and decisions taken at the end of a team session is also very important.



5 Key Principals for ALP

1. Moving forward by looking back
2. Begins with and end in mind
3. Multi level learning
4. Resource and support learning
5. Capatalise on memory and recency effect

Before Activity Review

At the start of the BAR, it is important to ensure that lessons learnt are recapitulated and the objectives of the activity are clearly articulated and shared to everyone. The main intent for facilitating a team session at this stage is to ensure that all members attempting the activity are clear on the intention and focused on what they have to do as individuals and as a team. And the key focus is on learning from the past, so that the team stays focused from an informed position and also on key things that would elevate their performance. Thus, team goal-setting helps set the key outcomes for this stage.

Team Goal-setting

In team goal-setting, it is important to first articulate with accuracy the specific objectives of the activity that the team is about to embark on. This allows the members to understand the requirements and expectations of their performance, and also surface any concerns/ additional inputs (if any). The facilitation techniques that you may consider using are:

• Cluster Analysis - to sense what individuals are thinking and individually focusing on, Headlining to categorise common goals that may be team goals for the activity

• Functional group discussions on their goals

During Activity Review

During Activity Reviews are planned time-outs during the activity to **share observations and review performance** so that the team effectively achieves mission success and learns in the process. The session used to discuss mission success and learning is the After Action Review. An AAR should usually occur during training, exercise or operations. Very frequently in the SAF, AARs also occur during projects, meetings, conferences, presentations etc. Therefore an AAR should occur almost immediately after any major activity, whilst all of the participants are still available, and their memories are fresh, to capitalise on the recency factor. Learning can then be surfaced and applied right away, even on the next day.

The following facilitation techniques can be used:

- **Small group discussions** that cover the following questions:
  - What was intended?
  - What went well?
  - What can be improved?
  - What leadership / values stories can we share?
  - What should the next key focus be?
  - Individual Reflection on observations on prior team performance and sharing within team
- **Wandering Flipchart**, with each flipchart focused on:
  - What went well?
  - What can be improved?
  - What else can be done?

Post Activity Review

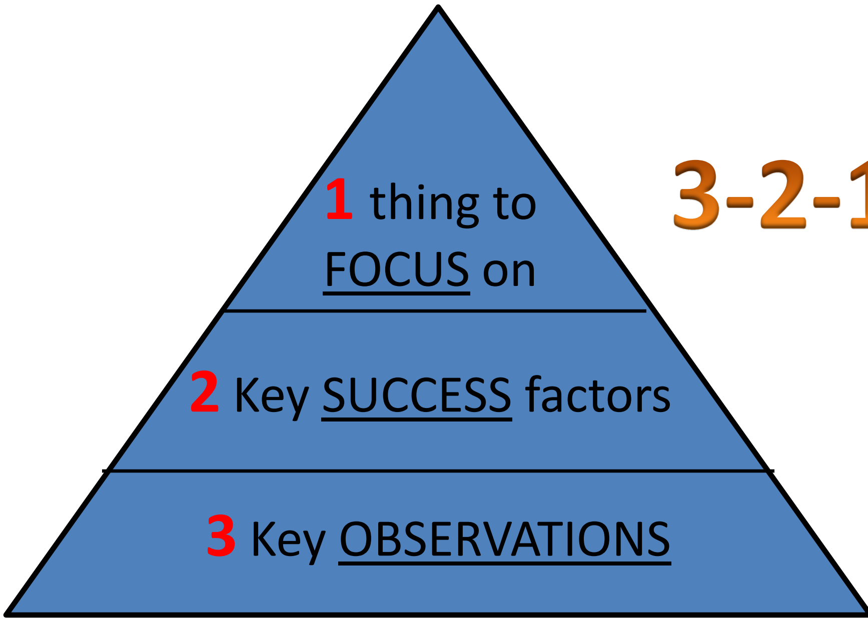
The intent of the PAR is to **consolidate learning**. Thus, it is important to hear from all levels of leadership so that learning can be shared across the levels. It is also thus important to cater enough time for sharing. Facilitators can commence the PAR by recapitulating the activity objectives and then proceed to gather learning/ insights from all or salient members of the team. Some pre-consolidation may be done if time is an issue.

The following facilitation techniques can be used:

- The World Cafe, where the following questions can be used:
  - What were the key insights from the activity/ mission?
  - What were the challenges faced?
  - How might the activity/ mission be implemented the next time?
- Ambassadorial Sharing
- Wandering Flipchart
- Summarisation, e.g. 3-2-1 Strategy

Post Activity Review

3-2-1 Strategy



3 key observations refer to surface knowledge, which the leader aggregates from what his team shares with him. There would often be similar observations from different people who go through the same activity. This is likely due to normal training situations not having any observers, hence it is not possible to list down all observations and analyse each of them. When several leaders are gathered in an AAR, there should be a range of observers as the leaders would then have to decide what he will share upwards.

2 key success factors refer to relational knowledge, requiring the leader to make connections between observations. The leader will then ultimately select an observation in favour of the other two and reframe these observations s lessons learnt, which will involve positive actions to ensure success in the future.

1 thing to focus on is similar to globalised knowledge – simply a choice between two chosen factors, and the decision of which one to take for action would be based on the opportunity to plough which of the two lessons in the next activity.

OTHER RESOURCES

Coaching Books:

1. John Whitmore, *Coaching for Performance,* Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2002.
2. Timothy Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Work,* Random House Publishing, 2001.
3. Alan Fine, *You Already Know How to be Great,* Portfolio Penguin, 2010.

Courses:

1. SAF Basic / Advanced Coaching and Facilitation courses - tagged to various ROA courses such as CTC, NJOC, AFAC, JFLC, GKS CSC and CSC(E)
2. Leader As Coach - via Centre for Management Development (CMD)
3. Power of Questions - via Centre for Management Development (CMD)

Facilitation Books:

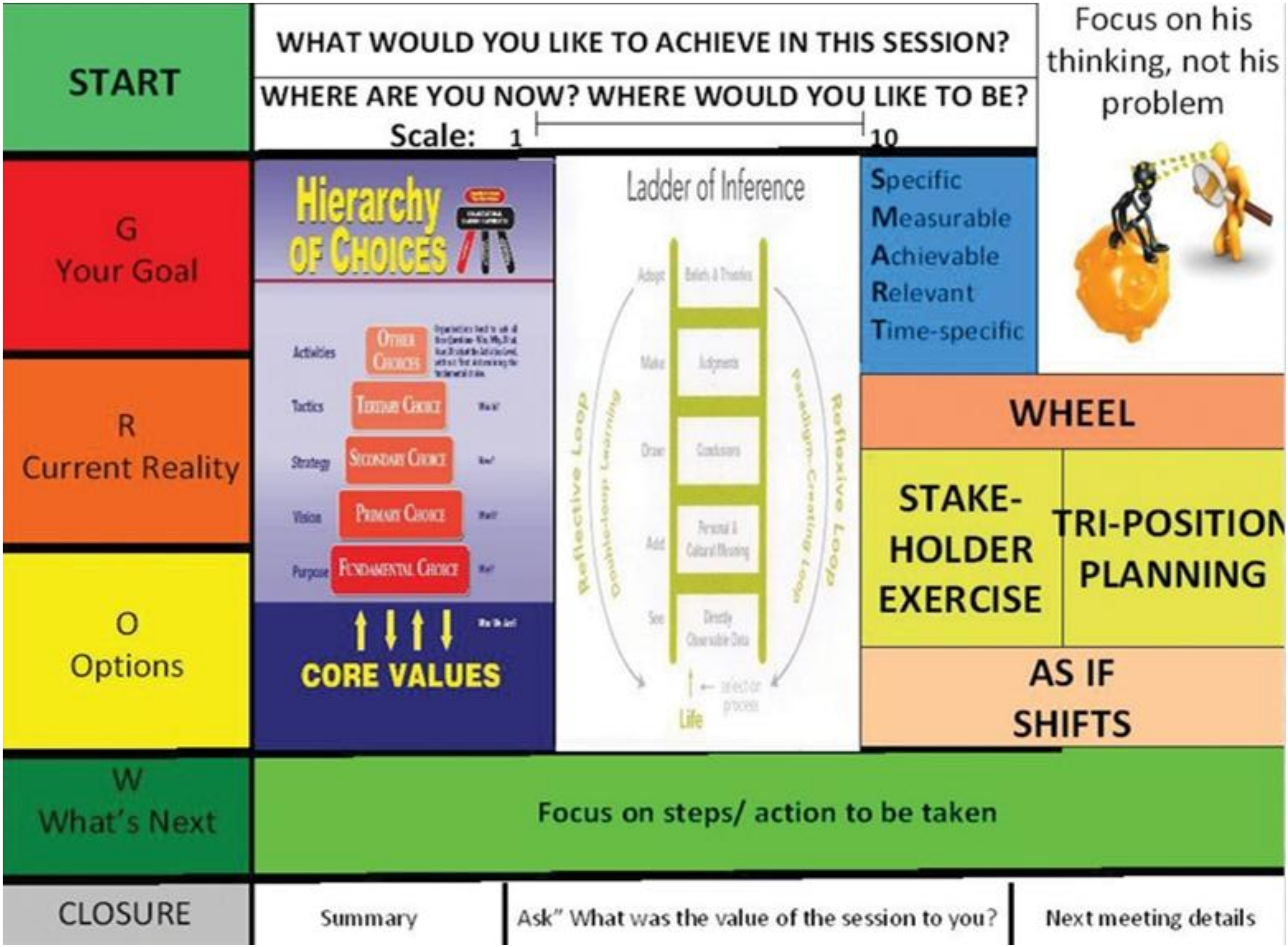
1. Prabu Naidu and Janice Lua, *Spot On Facilitation*, Candid Creation Publishing, 2011.
2. Roger Schwarz, *The Skilled Facilitator*, John Wiley and Sons, 2002.
3. Michael Doyle and David Straus, *How to make meetings work*, Penguin Group, 1986.

Courses:

1. SAF Basic / Advanced Coaching and Facilitation courses - tagged to various ROA courses such as CTC, NJOC, AFAC, JFLC, GKS CSC and CSC(E)
2. Leader As Facilitator - via Centre for Management Development (CMD)
3. Managing meetings effectively via CMD

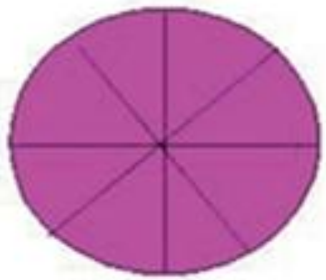
The following perforated pages are meant for you as Coaching and Facilitation Tools to serve as a pre-session guide in helping you prepare for your coaching conversations or team facilitation sessions.

START	Establish Rapport	What would you like to talk about today?
	Purpose	**Sample Questions**
Grow	Agree on goals	What would you like to achieve over the long term? For today?
		What is important to you?
		On a scale of 1 to 10, how clear are you? Where would you like to be at the end of this session?
Reality	Appreciate the current reality	What is the situation now?
		What has worked/not worked?
		Is your goal still realistic?
Options	Examine options	What possibilities can you think of?
		If you had the budget/time/information, what can you do?
		If you were your boss, how would you handle this?
What's Next	Decide on what to do next	What will you do from here onwards?
		What challenges/obstacles might come your way?
		How will you know you have achieved your goal?
CLOSE	Summary & Look Ahead	What was the value of this session to you? How can I support you in future sessions?


START
WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE IN THIS SESSION?
WHERE ARE YOU NOW? WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE?
Scale: 1 10
Focus on his thinking, not his problem
G
Your Goal
Hierarchy OF CHOICES
Activities
Tactics
Strategy
Vision
Purpose
OTHER CHOICES
TERTIARY CHOICE
SECONDARY CHOICE
PRIMARY CHOICE
FUNDAMENTAL CHOICE
CORE VALUES
Ladder of Inference
Reflective Loop
Double-loop Learning
Paradigm-Creating Loop
Reflexive Loop
Life
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-specific
R
Current Reality
WHEEL
O
Options
STAKE-HOLDER EXERCISE
TRI-POSITION PLANNING
AS IF
SHIFTS
W
What's Next
Focus on steps/ action to be taken
CLOSURE
Summary
Ask" What was the value of the session to you?
Next meeting details

THE SCALE

THE WHEEL



Can be used for listing:

- what is already done to achieve the goal
- ways achieve the goal

STAKEHOLDER EXERCISE

Coach to guide coachee by:

1. Listing all stakeholders of the project
2. Get coachee to physically step into the shoes of each stakeholder and visualise the project from the stakeholder's perspective

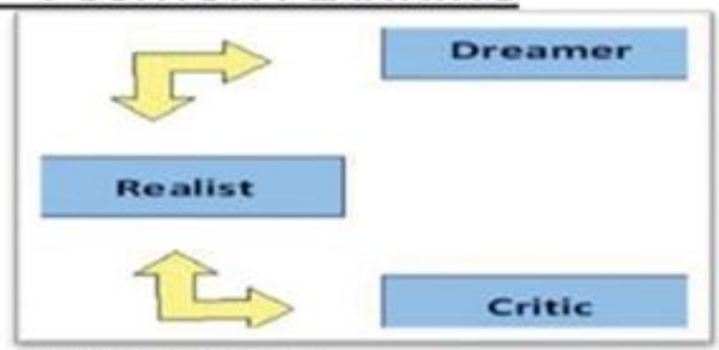
AS IF SHIFTS

This tool challenges one to think out of the box.
This tool can be used in the context of visioning, project management, professional and performance development.

Challenge the coachee by pushing the boundaries of:

a. TIME
(if you were working on this project 3 mths down the road, what would you see?)
b. PERSON
(if you were COL XXX, how would you view this?)
c. ROLE/ FUNCTION
(If you were the project leader in this...)
d. INFORMATION
(if you knew the cost of this...)

TRI – POSITION PLANNING



Coach to guide coachee by:

1. Stepping into DREAMER: here he/she thinks of the vision, possibilities that the goal can bring about.
2. Stepping into REALIST: here he/she thinks of steps required to achieve the goal
3. Stepping into CRITIC: here he/she thinks of how each stakeholders might view the goal/project.

PRE-SESSION	• WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACHIEVE IN THIS SESSION? • HOW CAN YOU DESIGN THIS SESSION TO MEET THE OBJECTIVES? • WHAT MIGHT YOU NEED TO CONSIDER TO EFFECTIVELY DESIGN FOR THE SESSION? (e.g. Participants, team culture, team history)

1. **Introduce** yourself and welcome participants. You should be explicit about the roles and responsibility of each member, including yourself.
2. Set the **Ground Rules** for the facilitated session, and reinforce that all members need to abide by these rules so that generative conversations can take place.
3. Clearly communicate the **purpose and agenda** for the session.
4. As you go through each item on the agenda, ensure that you **seek perspectives** from as many individuals as possible. **Listen** intently and **inquire** from a place of curiosity.
5. Provide your perspective (in terms of experiences and knowledge) only after seeking perspectives from the rest of the members.
6. Attempt to connect the dots for your team as the discussion flows and make these insights explicit. Help your team **gain insights and learn.**
7. As the Commander, you will be the decision-maker. It is important to seek out as much information from your team so that you can make decisions from an informed position. Record the decisions.

CLOSURE OF SESSION	• RECAP AGENDA • SUMMARISE THE KEY DECISIONS/INFORMATION FROM THE SESSION • ENSURE THAT KEY DECISIONS AND INFORMATION ARE MADE EXPLICIT AND KEPT FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Pre-Session

- What is the intent of this facilitated session?
- Who are your participants, who else might benefit from this session?
- What logistics do I require in setting up a conducive environment for facilitation?

During Session

1. Introduce yourself and welcome participants. Be explicit about the role and responsibility of each member, including yourself.

2. State
   - Objective of session
   - Agenda or programme
   - Ground Rules

3. A rule of thumb for dialogue is 'Divergence, then convergence'

4. As leader, you can help summarise and 'connect the dots'.

Closure Session

- Recap agenda
- Summarise key decision / conclusion so that everyone can see the way ahead.

Determining Requirements and Preparation

Workshop Details

Date

Time

Total Participant Number

Venue

Requirements of the Facilitated Session

Stakeholder Expectations

& Desired Outcomes

Workshop Outputs/ Deliverables

Participant Profile

Age Range

Education Levels

Tenure in Organisation

Gender

Levels in the Organisation

Background

Issues/ Challenges/ Opportunities requiring Facilitation

History, Background, Culture of the organisation/ department/ unit

Leadership Style

Creating a Learning Environment

Lighting

Sitting Arrangment for open and generative conversations

Appeal to all 5 senses (e.g. sound, visual)

Audio and Visual Equipments

NOTES

NOTES

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TO LEAD · TO EXCEL · TO OVERCOME

CLD

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