



## UNIT II: Interpersonal Leadership Skills

# Module 3: Discussions and Presentations

Facilitating a discussion meeting is different from leading an organization's monthly meeting using parliamentary procedure. The facilitator is a neutral person who gets the participants to talk about pieces of a problem and potential parts of a solution through a planned process. The neutral person is usually someone outside the group who has no vested interest in the outcome. If a group member serves as the facilitator, it's important that the role of the facilitator be distinguished from that of a member.

## Effective Discussions

Discussion in its context of leadership is not just talking. There is a purpose, usually related to solving a problem or initiating some action. Think about the group members and the topic as you plan your work as a facilitator or discussion leader. For example:

1. Present the problem in a positive way, without offering any suggestions for the solution to the problem. "We have been having a small attendance lately. What can we do about it?"
2. Choose discussion topics that are familiar. If a topic that needs to be discussed is unfamiliar, provide background when you present the problem.
3. If the group is often negative, use methods of discussion that have rules which avoid making judgments on suggestions until later in the decision-making process.
4. If the group is large, use methods of discussion which break the group into small groups or have people work individually. Allow time for people to respond. Sometimes you need to even postpone the discussion to a later meeting.
5. Arrange the group so that eye contact is possible. If the group is small, a circle that includes the leader is best. If the group is large, make some decisions in small circles and then share together with the whole group.
6. If the group tends to go along with decisions, but not want to work, set up the work plan in the same meeting. Decide who will do what and when. Then if no one wants to do it, it will be apparent right away that it was a poor group decision.

## What Causes "Lead Balloons"?

The term "lead balloons" refers to statements and actions that cause discussions to go off track or even stop completely.<sup>1</sup> Examples include: