



University Research Offices Conference
Best Practice Research Management Workshops
Wednesday 3 August 2011

Research Facilitation: Managing the Credibility Challenge

or
how to win at balancing “good cop” and “bad cop”



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Why Credibility?

In response to common questions

How can I get people to my advice seriously?

How do I ensure that I’m heard?

How can I convince them I’m here to help?

What can I do when a researcher....?

D McArthur (CFRI, Vancouver)
K Ohrvall (Concordia University, Montreal)

Objectives

- Identify issues
- Share stories & situations
- Find solutions
- Have fun

Activities

0900-0930	Overview
0930-1015	Small groups
1015-1030	Discussion

What does credibility mean?

- How trustworthy, reliable and competent we are considered to be
- The level of confidence others have in us to do our job well and with integrity

Credibility matters because...

- It must be earned
- It is not permanent
- It can be the best tool for – or the worst barrier to – success

Credibility is a challenge because ...

- We often work with people who don't know us well
- We work in a constantly changing landscape
- We have little control over many factors that affect our work

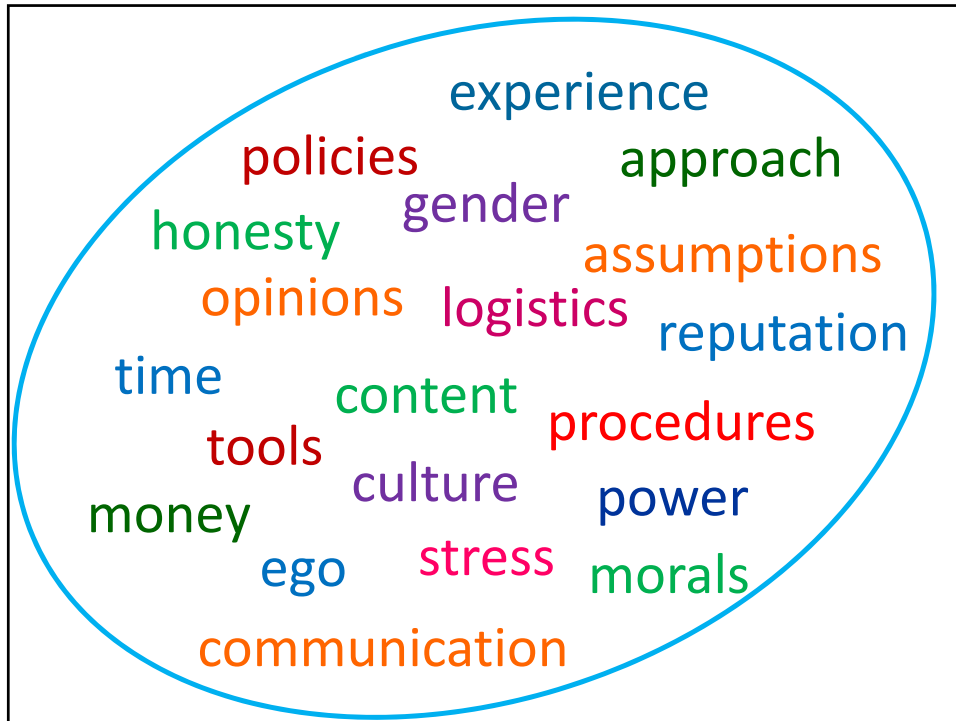
Organizational and individual factors

Organization

- Reputation
- Resources (levels)
- Attitude toward employee independence
- Decision-making support
- Internal procedures and forms

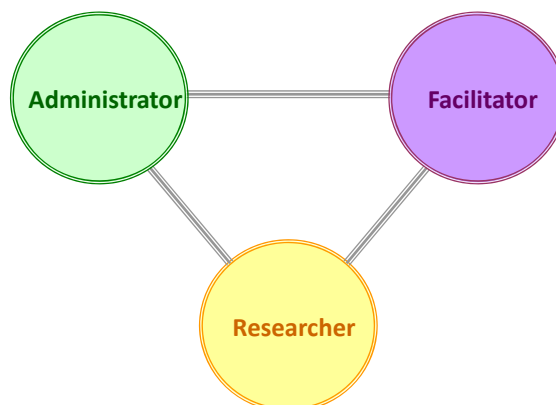
Person

- Position title
- Formal training (degrees)
- Experience
- Age
- Gender
- Culture/ community
- World-view
- Values



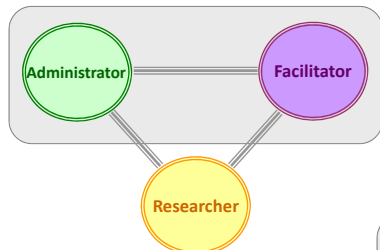
Multi-faceted roles and linkages

How do we communicate the interactions and values of each?

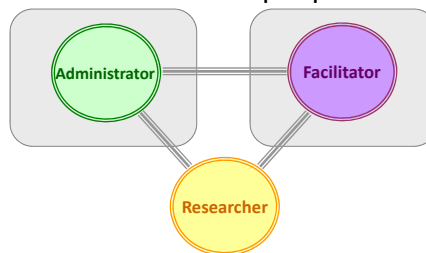


What happens when ...

there is one person?

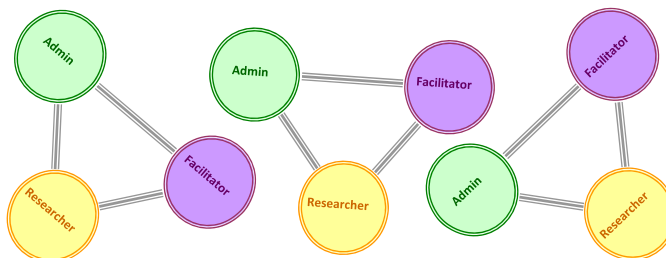


there are two people?



What happens when ...

There are multiple people and organizations ?



Ways of thinking



Thinking & acting: Structure and non-structure



Actions and descriptors

Administration

Necessary
 Mandatory
 Organizational
 Process
 Linear
 Track
 Manage
 What
 Do
 Tell
 Rules
 For

Facilitation

Not necessary
 Voluntary
 Strategic
 Program
 Non-linear
 Guide
 Mentor
 How
 Think
 Advise
 Ideas
 With

Role comparisons

Administrator

Referee
 Principal
 Traffic cop
 Inspector
 Builder
 Exam marker
 Tax auditor
 Proof-reader
 Enforcer

Facilitator

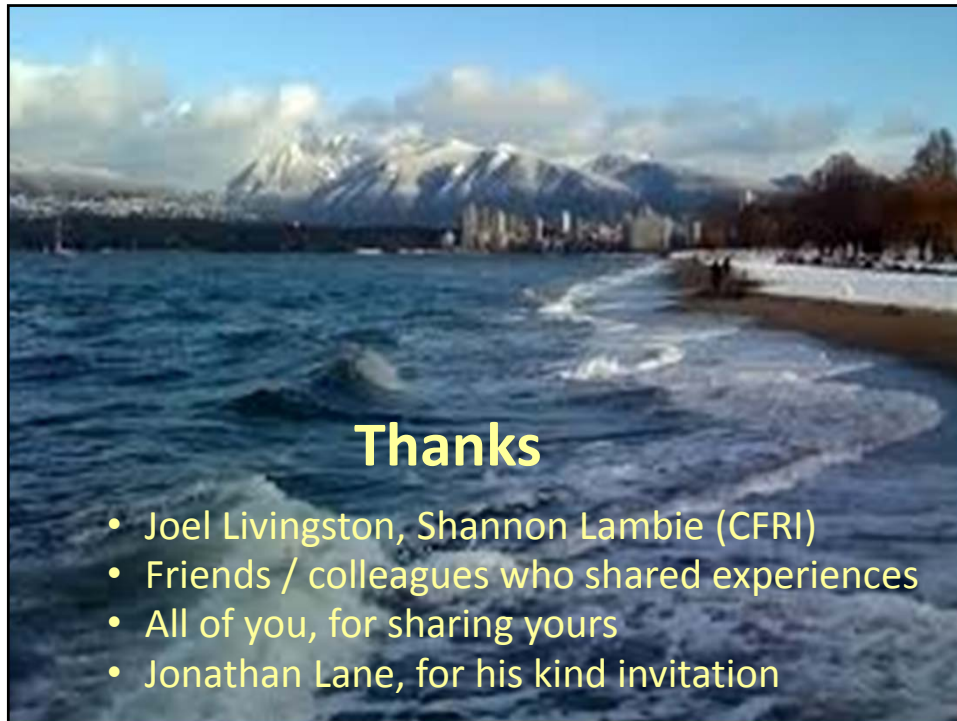
Coach
 Teacher
 Driving instructor
 Architect
 Designer
 Tutor
 Financial advisor
 Writer
 Advisor

Things researchers say... Really!

- Make sure that you are polite when you speak to ...
- I don't expect your feedback on the text...
Just make sure the forms are filled in correctly
- I need to buy my equipment immediately...
you MUST make the agency approve the budget *now*!!
- Can you find out if he wants to be co-applicant?
- Don't worry about that instruction... it doesn't matter
- Why are you arguing with me? My friend did it
that way last time, and the agency didn't care
- I don't trust (the research support person) to do
that part properly... I'll have to do it myself
- Are you going to waste my time?

Things researchers say... Really!

- So what do you do? Because I've worked with
someone like you in the past, and all I get are
a few edits or suggestions to explain terms that are
actually common to my field... it wasn't very helpful
- It takes me months to teach that subject to my class.
How can *you* possibly expect to understand it ?
- Don't worry about the research sections...
you won't understand those parts... just make it pretty
- I'm too busy to work on my CV or the budget...
my time is better spent on the important parts
- I totally trust you... why don't you just do it for me
and send me the final version



Small group exercise: Role playing

Materials

- Small groups of 3 people
- Skit scenario, index cards, pens
- Your personal experience, sense of humour

Activity

- Spend a few minutes getting to know one another
- Read through the skit scenario
- Choose a player for each role
- Choose a scribe to capture key conversational points
- Begin the play... continue for 10 min, then rotate among roles and continue until each person has played each role

Researchers: Be polite, rude, confused, challenging!