

Your logo

Moderation and presentation

Moderate professionally,
present effectively

SEMINAR EVENT

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Table of contents

Moderation4

- What is moderation?4
- The moderator4
- Things to observe as a moderator:5
- Tools and equipment6
- Presentation7
- How to prepare for a moderation9
 - Exercise sheet: Moderation plan11
 - Example: Moderation plan12
- The structure of a moderation15
 - 1. Introduction15
 - Opening and welcome16
 - Introductions of participants and clarification of expectations17
 - 2. Gathering topics22
 - 3. Selecting topics25
 - 4. Processing topics27
 - 5. Task plan34
 - 6. Conclusion36
- Questions – A moderator’s bread and butter38
- Problem-solving strategies41
 - Interruptions41
 - Reasons for disturbances, and possible solutions:42
- Types of participants44

Presentation49

- What is a presentation?49
- How to prepare for a presentation49
 - 1. ... the topic50
 - 2. ... the goal50
 - 3. ... the participants51
 - 4. ... the content52
 - 5. ... the structure53
 - Checklist: Opening55
 - Checklist: Main part58
 - Checklist: Conclusion60
- How to organize a presentation61
 - 1. Organizing a location61
 - Checklist: Locations for presentations62
 - 2. Preparing media63
 - Tips for preparing transparencies65
 - 3. Time management66
 - 4. Preparing handouts67
 - 5. Personal preparation67
- Giving a presentation68
 - Introduction68
 - Main part69
 - Enhancing concentration70
 - Employing media71
 - Conclusion72
- Dealing with interruptions and complications73
 - Disturbances73
- Post-processing the presentation75
 - Checklist: Post-processing75
 - Ten tips against fear of speaking:76
 - Reducing inhibitions77
 - Reducing stress – increasing self-assurance78
 - Seven vents for stress79

Day clearing80

MODERATION

What is moderation?

“Moderation” is known as the effort of one or several persons to enable and to facilitate the opinion-forming process of groups without steering or influencing it.

Moderation is employed wherever a group of participants is committed to reach a common consensus, e.g., in workshops, personnel discussions, or project group sessions.



The moderator

A moderator is considered to be a methodical helper who puts back his or her own opinions, goals, and values. He or she is not an expert of the subject matters that are dealt with in any given situation. He or she has a command of techniques or methods to enable the group to work effectively and to attain their self-elected goal.

The moderator initiates and guides the event by asking questions to participants. All answers are visualized, written down, or made otherwise available to all group members. These answers let the moderator know which subjects the participants want to work on first, what the views are concerning individual aspects, or how a certain problem can be solved. This process is repeated until a solution has been found for each subject. A moderation is characterized by targeted questions of the moderator, and the responses and solutions of the entire group.

Definition

Thing to observe as a moderator:

- **Plan the structure and the method of your moderation well in advance.**
This will instill you with a sense of security and self-confidence.
- **Share your intent and approaches with the group. Let them give their agreement.**
This will include the participants in the process, and presents insecurities of the group members. Their agreement entails a relaxed working climate.
- **Pass questions concerning the content on to the entire group.**
You are not responsible for the content, just for the methods that the contents are dealt with.
- **Avoid comments regarding the content and evaluations of participants' contributions. Assume a neutral stance.**
- **Make an effort to incorporate all participants into the moderation process equally.**
The topic concerns everyone present; everyone should be able to contribute to the solution of the problem.
- **Moderate in pairs of two, if possible.**
That way, one moderator can concern him- or herself with the dynamics of the group while the other one visualizes the contribution. Additionally, both moderators keep each other in check and therefore prevent losing their neutral stance and objectiveness in a heated debate. Another positive aspect is the fact that the mutual personal complementation can prove stimulating to the working climate.

Events with many participants, or with sensitive and loaded topics, should always be moderated in pairs!

Tools and equipment

Various materials are helpful and necessary for a good moderation.

- **Pin board and paper**

are suitable for small groups. Rule of thumb: one pin board per three participants. A sheet of paper or small index cards can be affixed to the pin board.

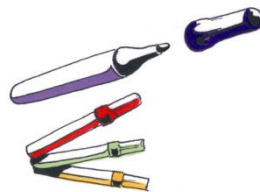
- **Flipchart**

A flipchart is suitable for small groups. Their advantage is that they can be prepared well in advance. By flipping back and forth, information can be made available at any time.



- **Felt-tip pens**

Be sure to use several colors (black, red, and blue). Use the lower edge of the pen to write and avoid turning it while writing. Pay particular regard to good readability, use large letters, and be sure to print them. Practice handling these pens before conducting your first moderation.



- **Other tools**

Various geometrical shapes made of cardboard (circles, squares, ovals etc.) to write on, glue dots for opinion polls, pins for affixing index cards, sticky tape, and scissors are necessary for a moderation.

These tools can be found in a “moderation kit” that you can either buy or assemble yourself. If you decide to do so, make sure not to miss any important parts.

Moderation materials

Presentation

It is advisable to create posters and cards in advance. Bear in mind the following aspects:

Pay attention to structure, symmetry, and interior logic of your presentation!

Divide your poster logically. If you create the poster before the event, you can use a pencil to divide your poster into four or nine equal parts to preserve symmetry. After a while, you will develop an eye for this technique so that you can also act this division out during the event. If possible, center your illustration.

Leave enough room. Avoid pushing units to the margin or into a corner of your poster. Link related aspects and leave enough distance to other context units. DO not overload your poster: Less can sometimes be more!

Be sure to make sensible use of shapes and colors!

Colors and shapes can be used to emphasize contexts and borders, or to underline important information. Use the same colors and shapes for certain context units.

Use colors that can be differentiated easily in order to underline important aspects, e.g., by underlining or hatching. Beware of exaggerations! Do not use more than three colors per illustration so that the poster will remain clear and comprehensible.

Structure and symmetry

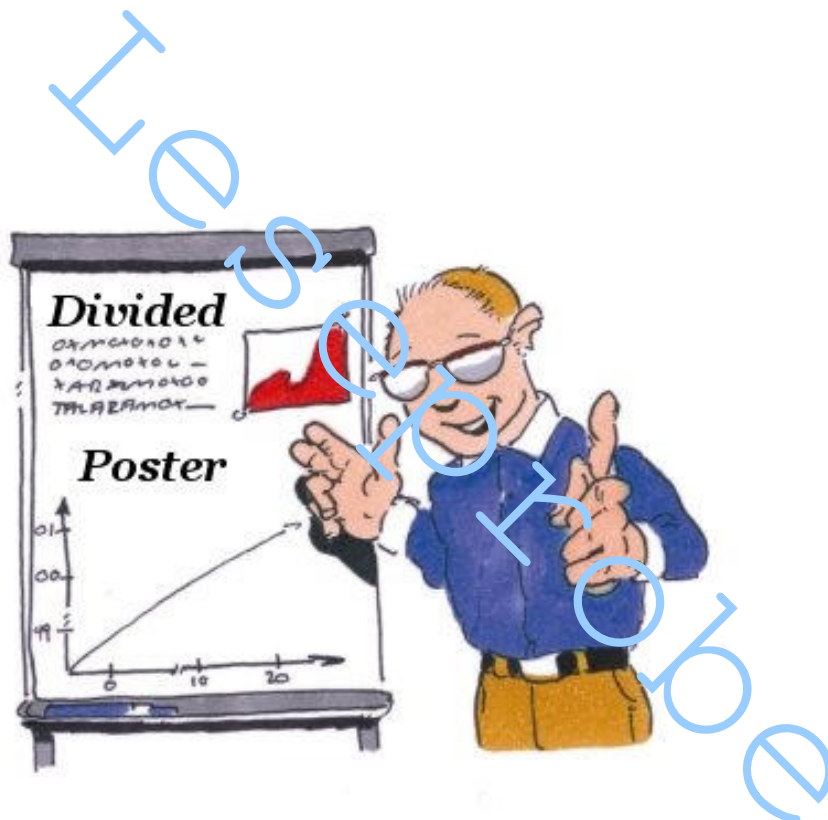
Colors and shapes

Pay attention to good readability and sophisticated illustration!

Readability and illustration

Use letters that are large but not too large. Use print letters rather than your usual penmanship. Avoid shorthand and abbreviations; if possible, write everything out longhand. Every once in a while, adorn your poster with small illustrations or sketches to lend it a likeable air and to make it less strict.

Please remember: No exaggerations – you're moderating, not playing Pictionary! Also, avoid illustrations that are too smooth for too much perfectionism will alienate your audience!



How to prepare for a moderation

Use the following pattern in order to prepare for a moderation:

1. Obtain a general overview.

When and where is the event going to take place? How long is it going to take? How many people are going to participate?

2. Obtain an overview of the subject matter.

No one requires you to be as well versed in the subject matter as the participants, but you should at least know the gist of the topic in order to be able to ask questions during the event.

3. Inform yourself about the participants.

Try obtaining as much information as possible about the personalities, wishes, desires, expectations, and professional knowledge of the group members. Pay attention to possible conflict sources.

This will enable you to adapt your moderation methods to the individual requirements of the respective group while preventing unpleasant surprises.

4. Formulate a rough goal for the event.

Make yourself aware of what you want to achieve in the event and which result you want to obtain in the end. This will aid you in working out an appropriate methodical concept.

Preparation

5. Devise a methodical concept.

Arm yourself with a moderation plan and reflect on the following aspects for each section of your moderation:

■ Number?

Note down the respective section of the moderation (introduction, gathering topics, selecting topics, processing topics, measure plan, conclusion). Start with an entry for the overall moderation, then work out the individual points.

■ What?

Note down the goals for this section, e.g., “introduction; create a pleasant atmosphere and introduce it to the event” for section 1.

■ How?

Note down the moderation technique for this section, e.g., “clarifying expectations and breaking the ice” for section 1.

■ Who?

Note down which task to assign to which moderator. Consult your partner in order to avoid unexpected delays during the event. Example: “Andrea opens; David presents the questions” (section 1).

■ Time?

Note down the approximate time that you want to allocate to this section. This is an important point in order to be able to stick to the general time frame. Example: “20 minutes for the introduction” (section 1).

■ Tools?

Note down which tools you want to employ in the respective section, e.g., “prepared poster (flipchart) including a visualized question and matrix” for section 1. Be sure to think about which posters or cards you can (or have to) prepare in advance, and note them down in your moderation plan.