

Appendix D

Facilitating a DECODE Conversation

DECODE / Meeting Facilitation Guide

What This Meeting Is

This meeting exists to decide whether commitment is justified.

It is neither a problem-solving session nor an execution review.

Your role as facilitator is to:

- Protect the sequence
- Slow the conversation where it rushes
- Stop commitment from forming accidentally

If people feel slightly uncomfortable, the meeting is working.

Ground Rules to Set at the Start

- We will not discuss solutions until allowed
- Disagreement is expected and useful
- Pausing is allowed
- Pausing without a decision is a valid meeting result when understanding is insufficient

State clearly when the meeting will stop and what decision is expected, if any.

D Define the Improvement Intent

Facilitator question:

Why are we even considering change?

What you are listening for:

- Value or capability language
- Relevance, not complaints

What you must stop:

- Problem statements
- Solutions
- Metrics and targets

If intent sounds energizing or obvious, it is probably too close to a solution.

Do not proceed until intent is clear enough to support further exploration.

E Explore the System as It Exists

Facilitator question:

What does the system look like right now?

What you are listening for:

- Description of elements
- Interfaces and handovers
- Context and conditions

What you must stop:

- Explanations
- Root causes
- The word because

If explanations appear, redirect to observation.

Disagreement here is a signal of incomplete shared understanding.

Do not resolve it yet.

C Clarify Embedded Decisions

Facilitator question:

Which past decisions shaped what we see?

What you are listening for:

- Intentional versus inherited choices
- Constraints versus habits
- Workarounds and legacy decisions

What you must stop:

- Treating history as inevitability
- Defending the current state

This step often feels political. Slow down rather than push through.

O Outline Change Boundaries

Facilitator question:

Where does change become unsafe or invalid?

What you are listening for:

- Physical limits
- Regulatory limits
- Organizational limits

What you must stop:

- Treating assumptions as boundaries
- Ignoring uncomfortable limits

If boundaries eliminate favored options, that is success.

Late boundaries create fragile decisions.

D Decide the Improvement Path

Facilitator question:

Given what we understand, what do we commit to?

Only three acceptable answers:

- Improve
- Redesign
- Preserve

What you must stop:

- Hybrid outcomes
- Pilots without commitment
- Deferred decisions disguised as action

Ask for the decision to be stated in two sentences.

If that is not possible, loop back or pause.

E Establish Closure

Facilitator question:

How do we prevent this decision from being rewritten later?

Capture explicitly:

- What was decided
- The evidence and reasoning supporting the decision
- Key assumptions
- Boundaries and scope
- Trade-offs accepted
- Conditions that trigger revisit
- Review date or review condition

Do not allow execution planning to replace closure.

Closure ends the meeting.

When to Pause

Pause the meeting if:

- Understanding is clearly incomplete
- New information is required
- Discussion turns defensive or circular

Pausing is cheaper than committing prematurely.

When to Loop Back

Loop back if:

- Intent is revealed to be misframed
- Boundaries invalidate earlier reasoning
- Embedded decisions change the context

Looping back is refinement, not failure.

When to Stop

Stop immediately when:

- A decision is made and closed

Continuing after closure causes drift and reinterpretation.

Final Reminder for the Facilitator

Your job is not to create speed.

Your job is to protect decision quality.

If people leave frustrated but clear, the meeting succeeded.

If people leave energized but vague, it failed.

DECODE / Facilitator One-Slide Card

Purpose of this meeting

Decide whether commitment is justified under uncertainty.

This is not a problem-solving or execution meeting.

Ground Rules

- No solutions until allowed
 - Disagreement is useful
 - Pausing is allowed
 - Pausing without a decision is a valid meeting result when understanding is insufficient
-

D Define the Improvement Intent

Ask: Why are we even considering change?

Stop: Problems, solutions, metrics

Check: Does this describe value, not action?

E Explore the System as It Exists

Ask: What does the system look like right now?

Allow: Description only

Stop: Explanations and the word “because”

C Clarify Embedded Decisions

Ask: Which past decisions shaped this?

Surface: Inherited choices, habits, workarounds

Watch: Defending history as inevitable

O Outline Change Boundaries

Ask: Where does change become unsafe or invalid?

Name: Physical, regulatory, organizational limits

Accept: That boundaries may eliminate favored ideas

D Decide the Improvement Path

Ask: What do we commit to?

Only options: Improve, Redesign, Preserve

Rule: If it can't be said in two sentences, stop

E Establish Closure

Capture: Decision, evidence and reasoning, assumptions, boundaries and scope, trade-offs, revisit triggers, review date or condition

End: No planning before closure

Facilitator Authority

Pause if understanding is incomplete

Loop back if framing collapses

Stop when the decision is closed

Reminder

Protect decision quality, not momentum.

Clear and uncomfortable beats fast and vague.

DECODE / Executive Decision Discipline

Purpose of this discussion

Decide whether commitment is justified.

This is not an execution update or solution review.

Rules of Engagement

- We decide before we act
- We surface disagreement early
- We may pause or choose not to act
- Closure ends the discussion

D Define the Intent

Question: Why is change worth considering now?

Listen for: Value and relevance

Stop: Problems, solutions, targets

E Explore the System

Question: What does the system look like today?

Require: Description, not explanation

Stop: Causes, opinions, “because”

C Clarify Embedded Decisions

Question: Which past choices are shaping this?

Surface: Legacy constraints and assumptions

Watch: “This is just how it is”

O Outline Boundaries

Question: Where does change become unsafe or invalid?

Name: Physical, regulatory, organizational limits

Accept: Good ideas being eliminated

D Decide the Path

Question: What do we commit to?

Only outcomes: Improve, Redesign, Preserve

Rule: Two sentences or we are not ready

E Establish Closure

Record: Decision, evidence and reasoning, assumptions, boundaries and scope, trade-offs, revisit triggers, review date or condition

End: No planning before closure

Chair Authority

Pause if understanding is weak

Redirect if discussion collapses into solutions

End the meeting once the decision is explicit and closure has been established

Final Reminder

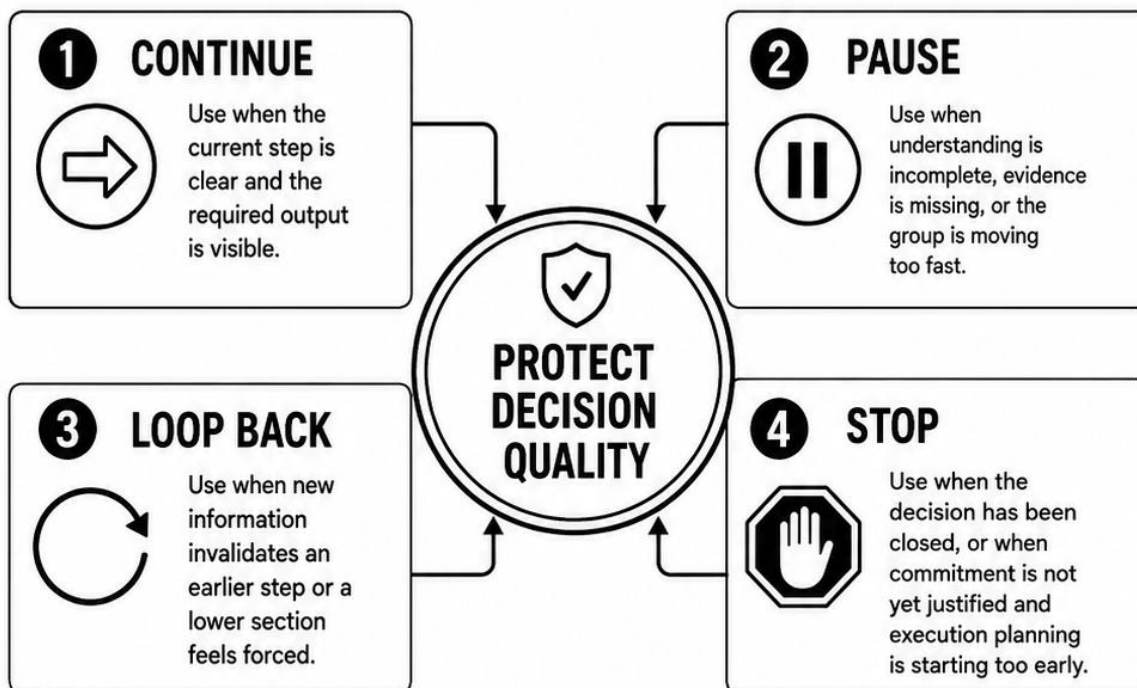
Speed feels decisive.

Clarity is decisive.

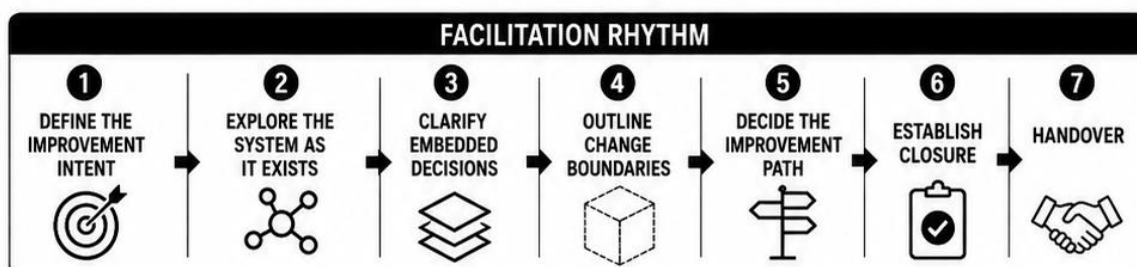
APPENDIX D

FACILITATING A DECODE CONVERSATION

A control map for protecting the sequence in real conversations



CORE FACILITATOR INTERVENTIONS			
 PARK SOLUTIONS Capture solution ideas without debating them yet.	 SEPARATE OBSERVATION FROM EXPLANATION Keep description clean before causal claims begin.	 SURFACE ASSUMPTIONS Make hidden reasoning explicit and discussable.	 PREVENT PLANNING BEFORE CLOSURE Do not allow tactics, tasks, or pilots to replace the decision.



RETURN TO THE PARKING LOT ONLY AFTER THE DECISION HAS BEEN CLOSED AND EXECUTION PLANNING BEGINS.

THE FACILITATOR PROTECTS THE SEQUENCE, NOT THE OUTCOME.