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Berlitz Practical Experience

Meetings Session 3: Dealing with differences

Objectives

In today’s session …

- Disagreeing diplomatically
- Working with challenging meeting participants

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Pre-video instructions



Watch the video featuring Hidetaka Matsumoto talking about problems at Silk Motors.

What is Mr. Matsumoto’s concern about the Results Only Work Environment?

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Video

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Icebreaker Simulation



Role:

- Silk Motors manager

Objective:

- To **identify** problems which could happen with the “Results Only Work Environment”

Time:

- 5 minutes

Silk Motors

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Debrief

- *What did you do well when sharing your ideas in this simulation?*
- *Were you able to persuade others or get them to consider your viewpoint?*



Language



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Disagreeing diplomatically



“You can disagree without being disagreeable.”

Ruth Bader Ginsburg
(U.S. Supreme Court Justice)

Do meeting participants always agree with each other?

What can you say to disagree without offending others?

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Disagreeing diplomatically

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Your idea is not good.

Your idea does not make any sense.

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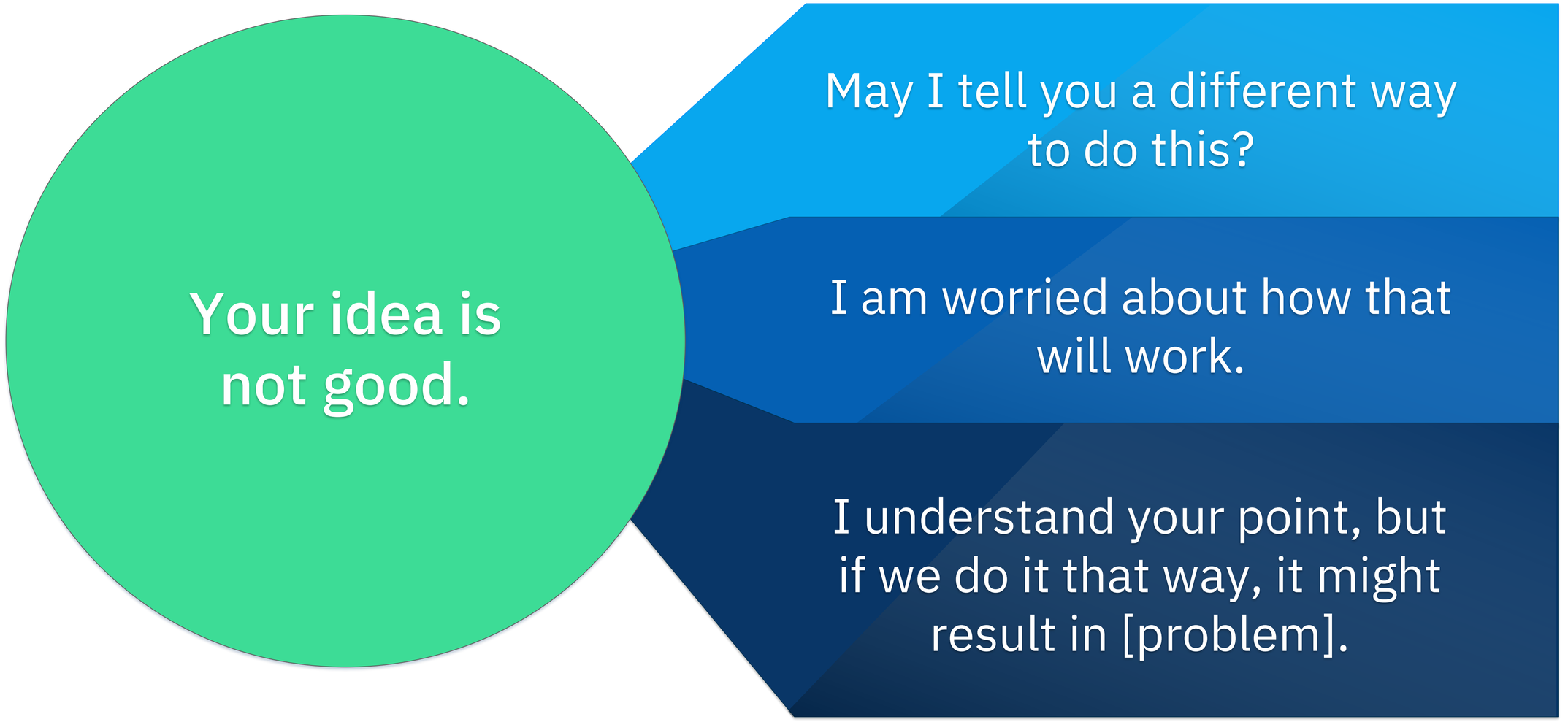
Disagreeing diplomatically



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Questioning other’s logic

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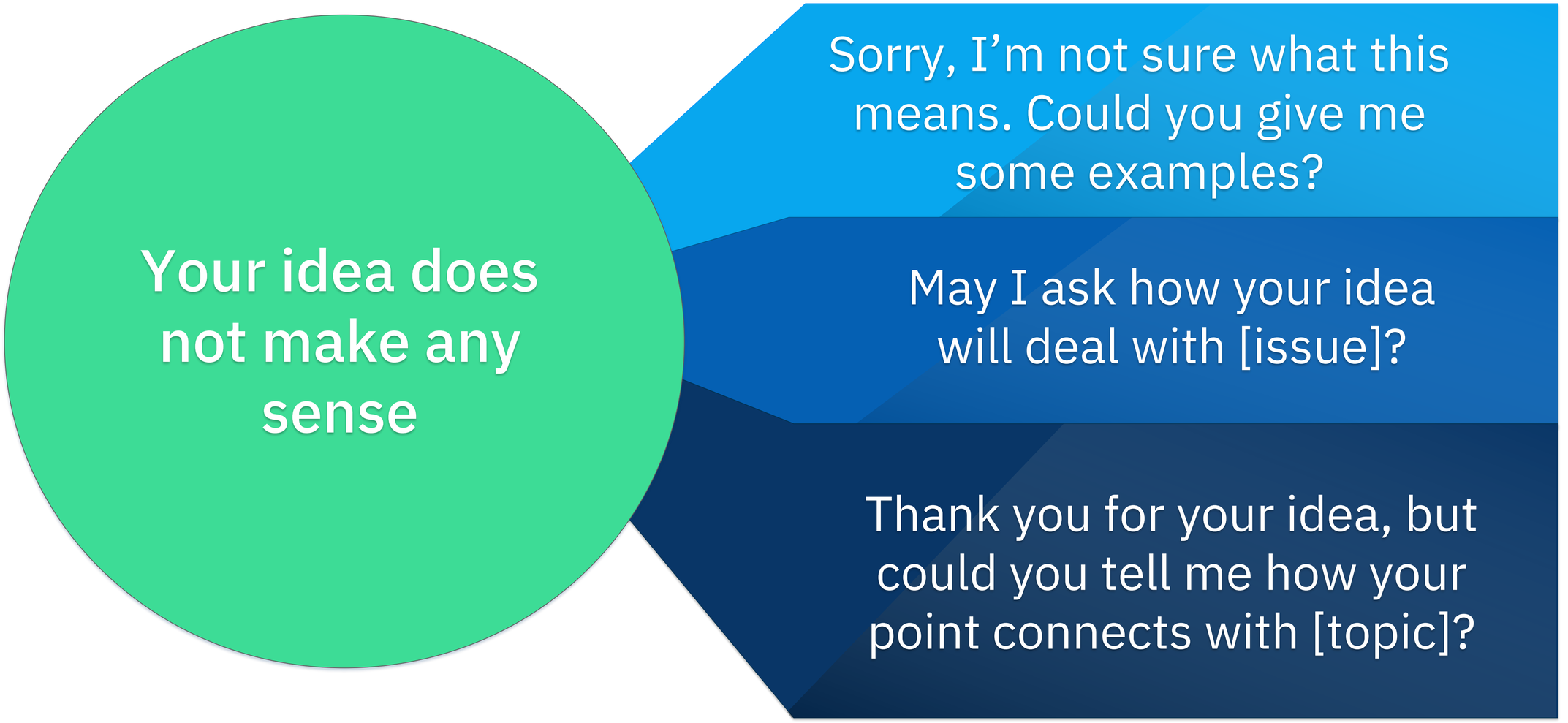

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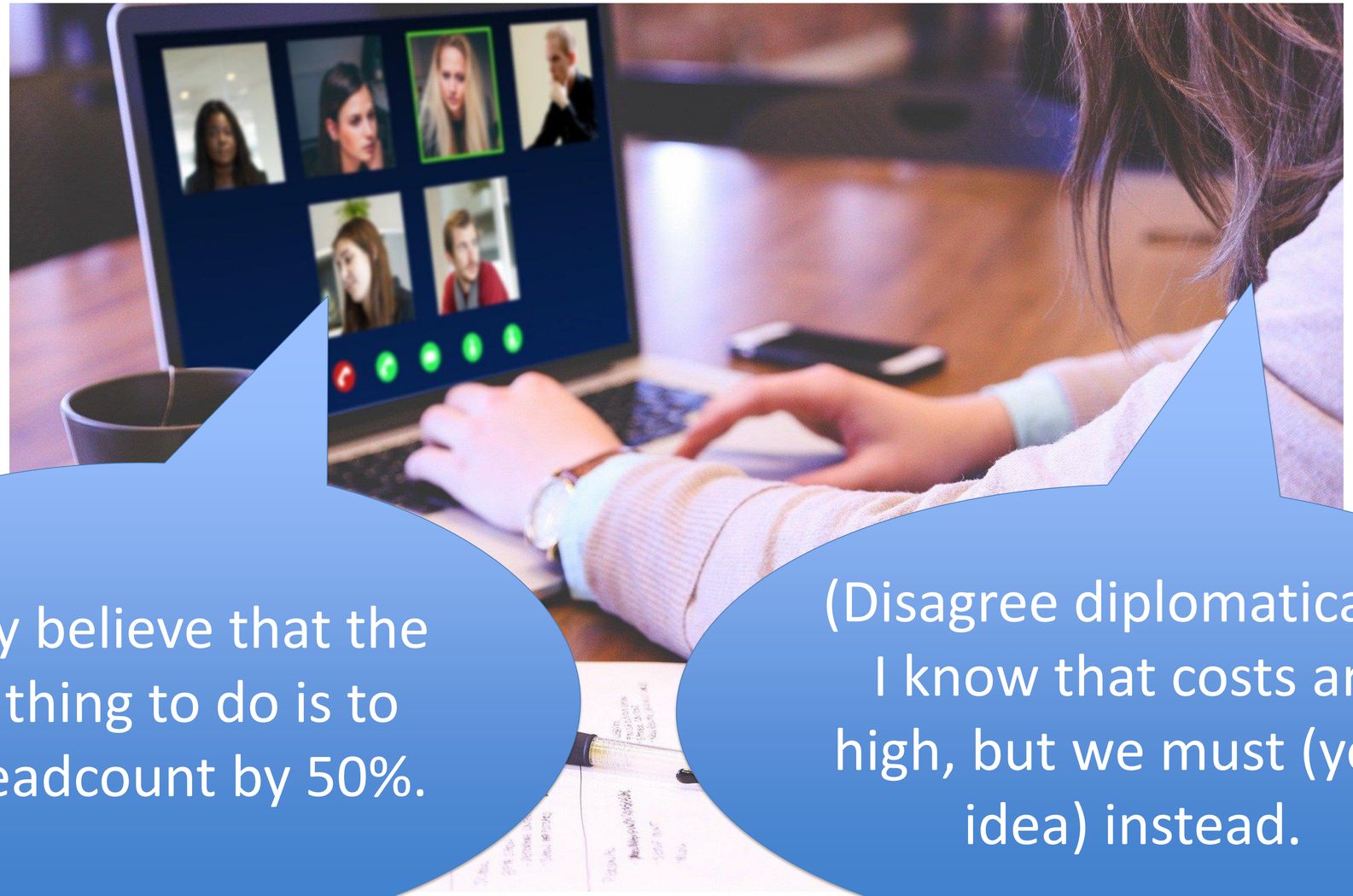
Disagreeing diplomatically



I really believe that the only thing to do is to cut headcount by 50%.

(Disagree diplomatically) I know that costs are high, but we must (your idea) instead.

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Disagreeing diplomatically



In my opinion, giving everyone 15 days off in a row is best. No ifs, ands, or buts.

(Disagree diplomatically) I hear what you're saying, however some flexibility is needed.

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Disagreeing diplomatically



With all due respect, your idea is irresponsible.

(Disagree diplomatically) I realize that some disagree with this, but (restate facts & benefits – motivation sequence).

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Questioning other’s logic



Why bother doing this? We’re all going to get fired soon anyway!

(Question logic)
I’m sorry you feel that way (empathy), can you think of some positive ways to change it?

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Questioning other’s logic



Cut, cut, cut! The sales department is full of useless staff. Let’s cut their department by 40%.

(Question logic)
Thanks for your opinion, but if we cut that, how will we increase our sales?

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Questioning other's logic



Frankly speaking, the only action to take is to reduce overhead.

(Question logic) Thanks for your comment, can you elaborate more on …?

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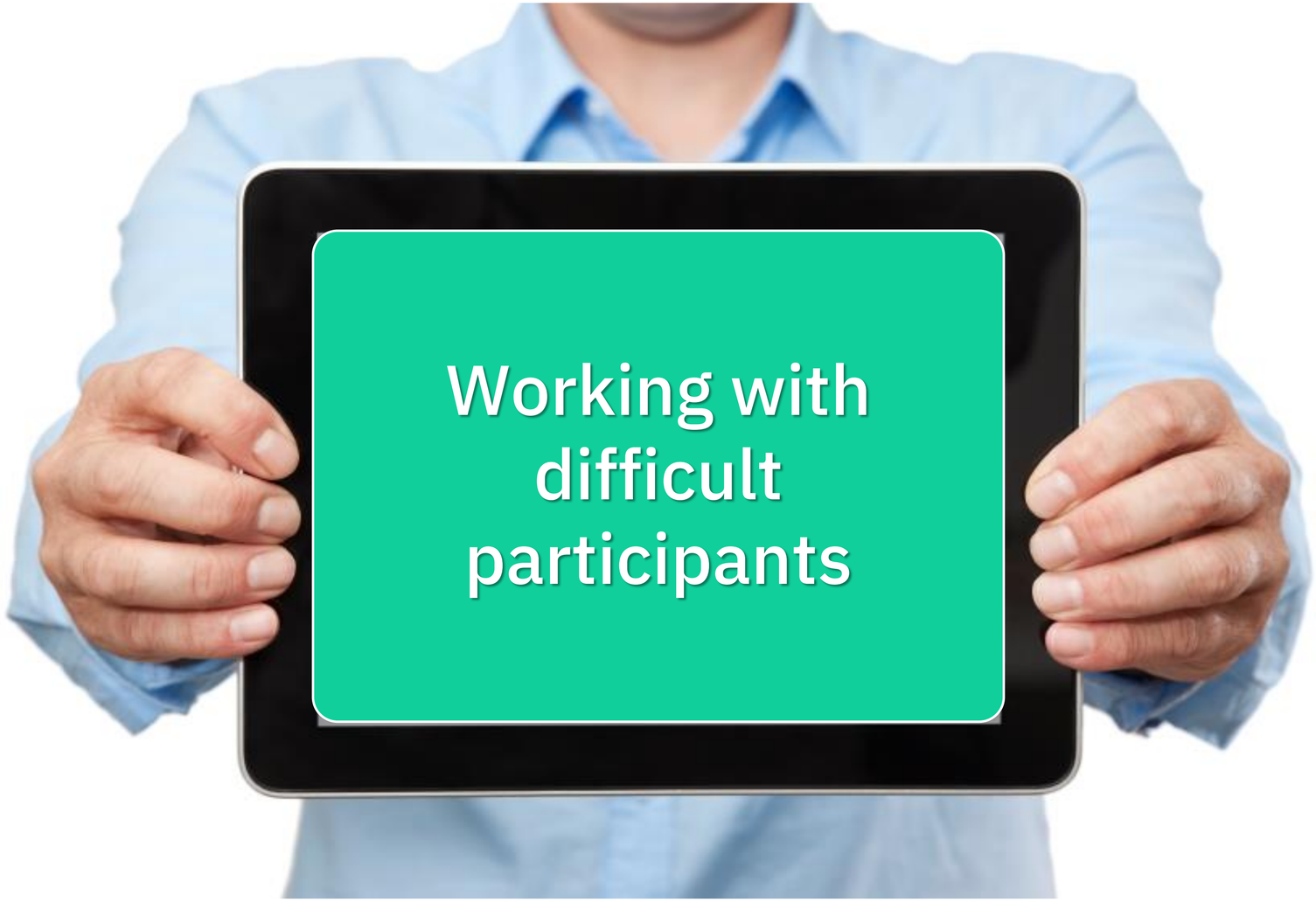
Skills



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Working with difficult participants

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Type of Participant	What “they” say:	Strategy	What “you” say:
Participant is quiet	“ … (nothing)”	Mention their experience and ask for their opinion	“Tatsuo, you worked on this last year, what do you think about …?”
Participant talks too much	“So, when I was in Greece, I spent 3 days in Athens and had a great time seeing …”	Stop them and remind them that time is limited and that we should go back to the agenda	“Simone, it sounds like you had a good time, however, time is short, and we should get back to the meeting topic.”

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Working with difficult participants

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Type of Participant	What “they” say:	Strategy	What “you” say:
Participant is too aggressive	“I think we have to just accept my idea and move on. There is no need to talk more about this!”	Thank them for their idea and mention the purpose of the meeting	“Thank you, Cyril, for that idea, but we’re here to brainstorm ideas from everyone.”
Participant is too negative	“Tanaka-san’s view on this is stupid!”	Remind them that we should respect others and to be open to ideas	“You may disagree with him, but let’s keep an open mind today.”

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Final Simulation



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Final Simulation



Role:

- Managers at Silk Motors assigned to the task force

Objective:

- To disagree diplomatically
- To identify problems which could happen with the “Results Only Work Environment”

Time:

- 10 minutes

Silk Motors

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Debrief



Objectives Review

- Disagreeing diplomatically
- Working with challenging meeting participants

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