

What To Ask When Looking For An Action Learning Set Facilitator

The facilitator's role is to enable the set to work on and with their own issues. This includes:

- establishing the ground rules and keeping the set on course
- focusing the set on the presenter
- creating safety for individuals to explore sensitive issues
- taking the set beyond superficial analysis
- helping the set draw out learning
- enabling the set to reflect on group process
- introducing the set to other tools for exploration, analysis and solution generation.

So relevant questions to ask when looking for an action learning set facilitator are:

- their experience as a set facilitator – what types of sets have they worked with, in what environments and over what period of time?
- ask for references – someone that you can contact who has used them as a facilitator or been part of a set they have facilitated
- how do they work? Ask them to summarise their style of working (for example, how challenging are they or how interventionist?)
- why they advocate action learning as a model?
- ask them to give examples of how they fulfil the role set out above (e.g. how do you create a safe environment; how do you ensure set members are stretched appropriately to their needs; what tools do you use to help set members reflect; how do they evaluate the impact of action learning?)
- what other development models they use, for example, coaching, mentoring - and who they have worked with
- how they would run the first session – i.e. get the set off the ground
- any professional group memberships – for example, IFAL
- their charging rate and exactly what that covers
- what materials they will use (ask to see them).