

Overview

MHEDA (Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association) is a trade association dedicated to serving the material handling community. MHEDA-NET is a complimentary, structured networking service available to all MHEDA members that facilitates video calls with peers from non-competing markets to discuss common business challenges. This is a valuable opportunity to connect with industry professionals and enhance your knowledge through shared experiences. It offers the convenience of no travel, with groups tailored to meet your specific professional networking needs.

Objectives

The primary objectives of MHEDA-NET include:

- **Networking:** Facilitating connections among industry professionals to build relationships.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Providing a platform for members to share experiences and discuss industry trends.
- **Professional Development:** Offering resources for members to develop their skills and advance their careers through peer discussions and more.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging collaboration on problem-solving initiatives to drive innovation and efficiency in the material handling industry.

Structure

MHEDA-NET is typically structured into various groups, each focused on specific topics or areas of interest within the material handling industry. These groups may be organized by various factors, including:

- **Industry Segment:** Such as industrial truck, storage and handling, system integrators, etc.
- **Function:** Such as general business, marketing, parts, etc.

Each group operates under the guidance of a facilitator, who plays a crucial role in managing the group's activities and ensuring productive interactions.

Role of a Facilitator in MHEDA-NET

A facilitator in a MHEDA-NET group is responsible for leading the group and ensuring that its objectives are met. The role requires a combination of leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills to effectively manage discussions, planning, meeting notes, agendas, and more. Below are the key responsibilities of a facilitator:

1. **Leading Discussions** – The facilitator is responsible for steering group discussions to ensure they are productive and focused. This involves:
 - a. **Initiating Conversations:** Starting discussions on relevant topics and encouraging members to share their insights and experiences.
 - b. **Guiding Dialogue:** Keeping the conversation on track, ensuring that all members can contribute, and preventing any one person from dominating the discussion.
2. **Planning and Organizing Meetings** – Effective planning and organization are crucial for the success of MHEDA-NET group meetings. The facilitator must:
 - a. **Schedule Meetings:** Coordinate with group members to find suitable times for meetings, considering different time zones and availability. MHEDA will assist in scheduling your meetings.
 - b. **Set Agendas:** Prepare meeting agendas outlining the topics to be discussed, ensuring that all relevant issues are covered. You may choose to do this at the end of a meeting in preparation for the next one, or you may choose to prepare this at the beginning of the year for each meeting.
 - i. **Sample Agenda**
 1. Welcome
 2. Roll Call of participants
 3. Review Agenda
 4. Assign a Timekeeper (if needed)
 5. Discussion Topic 1
 6. Discussion Topic 2
 7. Discussion Topic 3

****Note you may only get through 1 topic and can table topics till the next call****

 - 8. Current Challenges / Issues of the Day
 - 9. Next Meeting
 - 10. Solicit topic suggestions and assign leader if applicable
 - c. **Meeting Logistics:** MHEDA will arrange the necessary logistics and will provide the platform and send out the invitations to all group members.
3. **Managing Meeting Notes and Agendas** – Maintaining accurate records of meetings is essential for continuity and accountability. The facilitator should:
 - a. **Take Notes:** Document attendance, key topics, decisions, and action items discussed during meetings.
 - b. **Distribute Minutes:** Share the meeting notes with all group members promptly after the meeting.
 - c. **Follow Up:** Track topics discussed and remind members of their responsibilities if any. Some groups choose to allow members to rotate responsibilities weekly – if this is the case, please follow up with them as needed.

4. **Topic Selection and Research** – Choosing relevant and impactful topics for discussion is a critical part of the facilitator's role. This involves:
 - a. **Identifying Issues:** Recognizing current challenges and opportunities within the industry that would benefit from discussion.
 - b. **Researching Topics:** Gathering information and resources to provide context and background for the discussions.
 - c. **Soliciting Input:** Asking group members for their input on topics they find important and would like to discuss.
 - d. **MHEDA-NET Resources:** Use the various resources given to you from MHEDA, such as the Material Handling Business Trends, Discussion Questions, and more!

Skills and Qualities of an Effective Facilitator

To be successful in this role, a facilitator should possess the following skills and qualities:

- **Leadership:** The ability to lead and inspire others, guiding the group.
- **Organizational Skills:** The ability to manage meetings and documentation effectively.
- **Communication:** Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** The ability to build relationships and foster a positive group dynamic.
- **Adaptability:** Flexibility to adjust plans and approaches based on the group's needs.
- **Industry Knowledge:** A solid understanding of the material handling industry and the specific challenges and trends relevant to the group.

Benefits of Being a Facilitator

Serving as a facilitator for a MHEDA-NET group offers numerous benefits, including:

- **Professional Growth:** Enhancing leadership and organizational skills.
- **Networking Opportunities:** Building strong connections with other industry professionals.
- **Industry Insight:** Gaining deeper insights into industry trends through group discussions and shared experiences.

Accepting or Rejecting New Members

1. **Receive Application** – Check your email for a message from MHEDA with the new applicant's information.
2. **Review Information** – Read through the provided details about the applicant and consider factors such as their background, experience, and how they align with your group.
3. **Decision Process** – Work with MHEDA Staff to share the applicant's information with the group and facilitate a discussion within your group to determine if the applicant is a good fit.
4. **Notify MHEDA** – Within 30 days of receiving the applicant's information, please send an email to the designated MHEDA team member with your decision.

Attendance

The facilitator must maintain records of attendance for each meeting in the meeting notes form. Note any absences and whether the member provided prior notification.

1. **Monitor Absences** – If a group member misses three meetings without notification, please proceed to the next step.
2. **Initial Communication** – After three unnotified absences, contact the member of the group directly, politely remind them of the attendance expectations, and ask if there are any issues or concerns that may be preventing their attendance.
3. **Notify MHEDA** – If the member does not respond or if absences continue unnotified, please send an email to the designated MHEDA team member detailing the situation.

Code of Conduct

MHEDA is committed to providing a safe, productive, and inclusive environment for members, staff and event participants. All individuals, including, but not limited to, attendees, speakers, volunteers, sponsors, MHEDA staff, BOD, vendors, and all others are expected to follow our Code of Conduct at all association activities and interactions. Prohibited conduct includes but is not limited to:

- Harassment based on race, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other protected status, as provided by local, state or federal law
- Sexual harassment including any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offense or humiliation. Sexual harassment may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal or physical nature, including written and electronic communications, and may occur between persons of the same or different genders.
- Abusive conduct that has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with another person's ability to enjoy or participate in any association program or event, including social events. This includes inappropriate remarks and comments via email, phone calls, or in person during an event.
- Undue interruption of any conference event, speaker, session, or event.

MHEDA has a zero-tolerance policy for hostile, harassing or abusive conduct. If a person engages in such conduct, appropriate action will be taken, including but not limited to expulsion from the event, restriction from participation at future MHEDA events and/or termination of membership. Individuals who witness, become aware of or experience inappropriate conduct should report such conduct to MHEDA.

Antitrust Guidelines

The purposes of the Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association (MHEDA) are to foster, promote, improve, further and enhance the material handling equipment distribution industry and to do all such lawful acts and things necessary to further the best interests of the industry.

MHEDA therefore recognizes the need to be constantly vigilant to assure full compliance in all respects with the antitrust laws and in furtherance thereof hereby endorses the basic principles contained in this guide for members and staff of the association.

MHEDA unequivocally supports the policy of competition served by the antitrust laws and reaffirms its uncompromising intent to comply strictly in all respects with those laws. It is the responsibility of every MHEDA member and staff person to be guided by its policy of strict compliance with the antitrust laws.

Topics which must be avoided at MHEDA meetings include discussion or agreement of:

- Prices, range of prices, pricing methods, profit margins, possible changes in prices, pricing stabilization, cash discounts and credit terms.
- Pricing practices of any industry member.
- Forecasts of price increases or decreases.
- Bids, or intent to bid or not bid on a contract.
- Allocation of a customer or class of customers or dividing up geographic territories.
- Refusal to buy from, or to sell to, one or more companies.
- Preventing any person from gaining access to a market or to a customer.
- Preventing or boycotting any person from obtaining a supply of goods or services freely in the marketplace.
- In general, any discussions or actions which would tend to restrict competition between members or competitors, within the industry generally.

If a topic does come up, and the meeting chairperson is not sure whether it is legally appropriate, the topic should be tabled until the next meeting and the chair should confer with MHEDA staff and MHEDA legal counsel for guidance.

During informal or social discussions at the site of a MHEDA meeting, when the meeting is not in session, all members and staff are expected to observe the same standards of conduct required by these guidelines.

Solicitation Policy

MHEDA-NET is designed to foster open, supportive, and collaborative interactions among members. To ensure a positive and productive environment, we have established a No Solicitation Policy, which applies to all participants and attendees.

Participants are not permitted to engage in any form of solicitation during MHEDA-NET meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, promoting or selling products, services, or business opportunities. All participants must maintain relevant topics of discussion that aim to benefit the group, rather than individual commercial interests.

If a participant feels that they have been subject to solicitation or observes such behavior, please report the incident to MHEDA. All reports will be handled confidentially and investigated promptly.

Conclusion

Being a facilitator for a MHEDA-NET group is a rewarding role that requires a blend of leadership, communication, and organizational skills. It involves guiding discussions, planning and organizing meetings, managing documentation, selecting relevant topics, and maintaining effective communication. Facilitators play a critical role in ensuring the success of their groups, fostering collaboration, and driving professional development within the material handling industry.