



GREAT
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LEARNING

HOW TO **BUILD** A FACILITATOR GUIDE

Participant Material



How to Build a Facilitator Guide

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Overview

Purpose



Why a “How to Build a Facilitator Guide” program?

A well-designed facilitator guide is the backbone of successful instructor-led training, helping to deliver more consistent, engaging, and effective learning experience.

For the Learner

When facilitators have the right tools, learners benefit from clearer instruction, better discussions, and stronger knowledge retention.

For the Facilitator

A facilitator guide serves as a roadmap for delivery, providing structure, confidence, and support. It helps facilitators focus on leading meaningful learning experiences instead of worrying about what comes next.

For the Organization

Strong facilitator guides improve training quality, reduce delivery variability, accelerate facilitator onboarding, and help ensure learning programs achieve their intended business outcomes. Consistent delivery leads to consistent results.



Why are you excited for this session on “How to Build a Facilitator Guide”?

Learning Objectives



Learning Objectives

After completing this program, participants will be able to:

- Describe what makes a facilitator guide effective.
- Recognize the key sections every facilitator guide should include.
- Design facilitator instructions that support active learning.
- Identify common facilitator guide mistakes and know how to fix them.



What do you hope to learn from the session?

How to Build a Facilitator Guide

Introduction

**How are your
facilitator guides
created today?**



Poll: How Are You Currently Building FGs?

- A. We do not use facilitator guides
- B. We use basic notes or slide annotations
- C. Each designer or facilitator does something different
- D. We use a standardized structure
- E. A little bit of all of the choices
- F. None of the choices



Capture Your Notes

Introduction



Debrief

Many organizations rely on

- Informal knowledge
- Expert facilitators, or
- Slide decks alone

The facilitator guide is the tool that helps capture delivery logic, reduce variation, and make training easier to scale.

Agenda



What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide



Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Facilitator Guide Walkthrough



Common Mistakes (And How to Avoid Them)



Build a Facilitator Guide with LeaderGuide Pro



Q&A and Wrap Up

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?



When a facilitator struggles during delivery, what is usually missing?

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?

Definition of a Facilitator Guide

A facilitator guide is a behind-the-scenes instructional document with instructions on

What
To Do

When
To Do It

How To
Do It

How To
Prepare



Facilitator Guide Definition

A facilitator guide is a behind-the-scenes instructional document that tells facilitators what to do, when to do it, how to do it, and how to prepare.

It is NOT a:

- Slide deck
- Script
- Participant Guide

A Facilitator Guide is a performance support tool for the instructor.

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?



Capture Your Notes

5 Characteristics of a Great FG

- 1 A Facilitator Guide Supports Preparation
- 2 A Facilitator Guide Supports Delivery
- 3 A Facilitator Guide Focuses on Actions
- 4 A Facilitator Guide Balances Consistency and Flexibility
- 5 A Facilitator Guide Reduces Cognitive Load

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?



The Five Characteristics Of A Great Facilitator Guide

A facilitator is more than just SAY, DO, & ASK. Here are their 5 main characteristics

1

A Facilitator Guide Supports Preparation

A great guide helps facilitators:

- Understand objectives
- Learn the flow
- Prepare materials
- Anticipate questions

Before facilitators teach, they need to study.

2

A Facilitator Guide Supports Delivery

During class, facilitators need:

- Quick prompts
- Timing
- Activity instructions
- Debrief questions
- Transitions

The guide should function as a real-time support tool.

3

A Facilitator Guide Focuses on Actions

Weak guides say:

Discuss communication styles.

Strong guides prompt the instructor:

- *Ask participants which communication style frustrates them most.*
- *Capture responses on flipchart.*
- *Facilitate discussion.*
- *Debrief key patterns.*

Action-based language with complete & concise instruction improves usability.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?



The Five Characteristics Of A Great Facilitator Guide, Continued

4

A Facilitator Guide Balances Consistency and Flexibility

Great guides preserve:

- Key messages
- Learning objectives
- Required activities
-

While allowing facilitators to:

- Use personal stories
- Adjust examples
- Adapt to learners

Consistency does not require scripting.

5

A Facilitator Guide Reduces Cognitive Load

Facilitators are managing:

- Content
- Participation
- Time
- Technology
- Questions

A good guide reduces mental overhead through clear structure and formatting.

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?



Poll: What is Missing From Your FG?

- Preparation guidance
 - Timing
 - Activity instructions
 - Debrief questions
 - Transitions
 - Visual cues
 - Other
-



Facilitator Guide Litmus Test

If your facilitator guide was handed to an instructor who has never taught the course before...

Would the participants have a consistent learning experience with similar learners who went through the same training with the seasoned facilitator of this course?

If the answer is no:

- The guide probably needs improvement.
 - The best facilitator guides are invisible to learners, but their impact is felt in every well-run learning experience.
-



Capture Your Notes

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



What are some deliverables that might accompany a facilitator guide?

Begin With The End in Mind

What are the deliverables that are needed for this training?

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Begin With The End In Mind

- Are you creating only a facilitator guide?
- Will there be a participant guide?
- Handouts?
- Case studies?
- Evaluations?
- Job aids?

Effective ILT isn't a collection of individual resources. It's a coordinated system built around:

- Facilitator Guide
- Participant Guide
- Slides

Together they create a complete learning experience.



Capture Your Notes

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide

Gather Your Starting Materials?

Common Starting Materials:

- Design documents
- Learning objectives
- Existing slide decks
- Previous versions of training
- SME notes
- SMEs themselves
- eLearning modules
- Existing participant materials



Evaluate Your Starting Materials

Don't just collect materials. Evaluate them.

Ask Yourself:

- Does this support my course goal?
- Is it still accurate?
- Is it appropriate for my audience?

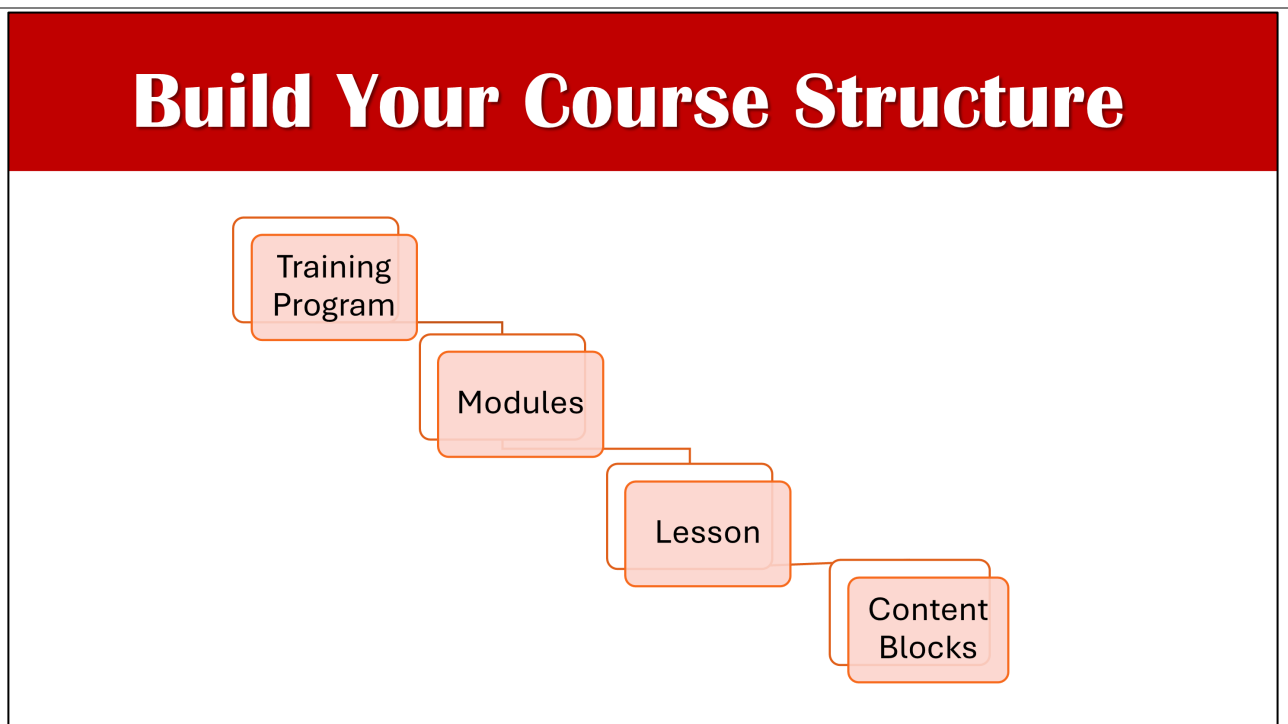


Note:

Existing materials save time, but they almost always require editing to match a consistent voice and learner experience.

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Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Building Course Structure Key Points

Think of the course structure as the route learners follow to reach the destination.

- Modules represent major outcomes.
- Lessons support those outcomes.
- The lesson level is where facilitation actually happens.

That's where you'll:

- Ask questions
- Run activities
- Show slides
- Lead debriefs
- Present key points



Best Practice

Build your structure from learning objectives whenever possible.

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Warning

Avoid organizing courses around:

- Day 1
- Day 2
- Day 3

The structure should help participants locate information after the class is over, not merely reflect the training schedule.



Capture Your Notes

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Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide

Key Development Principles

- 1 Chunk Information
- 2 Using Consistent Content Blocks
- 3 Complete & Concise Facilitator Instruction
- 4 Include Timing
- 5 Formatting Matters



Key Development Principles

1

Chunk Information

Organize content into logical, repeatable sections. Such as:

- Say
- Ask
- Show Slide
- Activity
- Debrief
- Key Point

These visual patterns help facilitators quickly locate information during delivery.

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Capture Your Notes



Make the following key points:

2

Use Consistent Content Blocks

Not everything belongs in participant materials.

Example:

- A **SAY** block may exist only for facilitators.
- A **KEY POINT** block may appear in both facilitator and participant guides.

This creates efficiencies when developing multiple training resources.

3

Complete but Concise

A facilitator guide is not a script.

However, it must contain enough information that another facilitator could deliver the course successfully.

Bad instruction:

Discuss the seven factors of customer satisfaction.

Better instruction:

Discuss the seven factors of customer satisfaction:

1. Reliability...
2. Responsiveness...
3. etc.

The facilitator should never have to reconstruct the course from memory.

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide

4

Include Timing

Timing helps facilitators manage:

- Activities
- Discussions
- Role plays
- Debriefs

It also helps them know what to shorten if time becomes an issue.

5

Formatting Matters

- Facilitators use guidebooks "at-a-glance."
- Clear formatting is not cosmetic.
- It's a usability feature.
- Do NOT be afraid of white space



Best Practice

Write for the least experienced facilitator who may someday deliver the course.



Capture Your Notes

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide

Add Logistics & Materials

Facilitator Guides Should Include:

- Materials List
- Room Setup Instructions
- Virtual Delivery Setup
- Technology Requirements
- Pre-Work
- Post Training Activities
- Resource Links
- Reference Documents



Facilitator Guides Should Include:

- Material lists
- Room setup requirements
- Virtual delivery setup
- Technology requirements
- Pre-work
- Post-training activities
- Resource links
- Reference documents

These details reduce surprises and improve consistency across facilitators and sessions.



Capture Your Notes

Five Steps to Build a Facilitator Guide



Which of these five steps causes the most difficulty in your organization today?

Facilitator Guide Walkthrough

Facilitator Guide

Getting Started

The Program in Perspective



Why a “How to Build a Facilitator Guide” program?

A well-designed facilitator guide is the backbone of successful instructor-led training, helping to deliver more consistent, engaging, and effective learning experience.

For the Learner

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For the Facilitator

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For the Organization

Strong facilitator guides improve training quality, reduce delivery variability, accelerate facilitator onboarding, and help ensure learning programs achieve their intended business outcomes. Consistent delivery leads to consistent results.



Learning Objectives

After completing this program, participants will be able to:

- Describe what makes a facilitator guide effective.
- Recognize the key sections every facilitator guide should include.
- Design facilitator instructions that support active learning.
- Identify common facilitator guide mistakes and know how to fix them.

Program Timing

Requires: 0 hours, 60 minutes

Number of Participants

Minimum: 5 Maximum: 60 Optimum: 25

Facilitator Guide Walkthrough

Getting Started

Facilitator Guide

Program Preparation

Pre-Work

1. Review one facilitator guide they have used or created previously
 - a. Identify what worked well.
 - b. Identify one or two frustrations or challenges.
2. Complete a brief self-assessment
 - a. How confident are you in building facilitator guides?
 - b. What is your biggest challenge when creating facilitator guides?
 - c. What do you hope to improve?
3. Reflect on the question:
 - a. *"What information would a new facilitator need to successfully deliver one of my training programs?"*

Participant Technology Requirements

- Reliable internet connection
 - Computer with microphone and speakers/headset
 - Webcam strongly encouraged
 - Zoom desktop application installed
 - Ability to access course materials electronically
-

Required Materials

- How to Build a FG PowerPoint Deck
- How to Build a FG – Facilitator Guide

Facilitator Technology Requirements

- Reliable internet connection
 - Computer with microphone and speakers/headset
 - Webcam
 - Zoom desktop application installed
-

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Facilitator Guide Walkthrough

Facilitator Guide

How to Build a Facilitator Guide

What Makes a Great Facilitator Guide?

	Facilitator	Notes
	Cumulative Time: 0 hours, 5 minutes Time to complete this lesson: 7 minutes.	
Slide 4		
	Ask: When a facilitator struggles during delivery, what is usually missing?	 Listen For: ■ Clear instructions ■ Timing guidance ■ Activity directions ■ Discussion questions ■ Confidence
	Say Something Like: Most training teams focus on content. Great facilitator guides focus on facilitating that content.	

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Facilitator Guide Walkthrough

Facilitator Guide

How to Build a Facilitator Guide

Facilitator Guide Walkthrough

	Facilitator	Notes
	Cumulative Time: 0 hours, 24 minutes Time to complete this lesson: 10 minutes.	 Time Check If you are running long, shorten this up from 10 to 5 minutes
Slide 18 		
	Screen Share Share the How to Build a Facilitator Guide FG	 Note: This is the easiest if you just show what you are facilitating from
	Walkthrough Instructions Make sure to point out: ■ Study guide material ■ Course structure ■ Content Blocks ■ Slide references ■ Time markers ■ Complete & concise facilitator instructions	

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This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #1: Lack of Course Structure

The facilitator guide is little more than content organized in a linear document.

How To Fix

Create a clear course architecture tied to the program's learning objective

Course

- I. Module
 - A. Lesson
 - i. Content Block



Mistake #1: Lack of Course Structure

The facilitator guide is little more than content organized in a linear document. There are no modules, lessons, transitions, summaries, or clear milestones.

The Negative Effect

The facilitator lacks a roadmap and is forced to navigate the training experience on the fly.

The Ramifications

■ For the Facilitator:

- Loses their place during delivery
- Struggles to transition between topics
- Appears less confident and less prepared
- Spends mental energy figuring out "where am I?" instead of focusing on learners



Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

■ For Learners

- Cannot see how concepts connect
- Experience information as random topics rather than a learning journey
- Become confused about priorities and key takeaways
- Have difficulty retaining information because the content lacks organization

- For the Organization

- Training quality varies dramatically between facilitators
- Program scalability becomes difficult
- New facilitators take longer to become proficient

How to Fix It

Create a clear course architecture tied to the terminal and enabling objectives:

Training Program

- I. Modules
 - a. Lessons
 - i. Content Blocks



Capture Your Notes

[illegible]

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #2: Over-Reliance on Slide Decks

The facilitator guide repeats exactly what appears on the slides.

How To Fix

Use the guide to provide:

- Talking Points
- Stories
- Facilitation Tips
- Examples
- Questions
- Discussion Prompts



Mistake #2: Over-Reliance on Slide Decks

The facilitator guide repeats exactly what appears on the slides.

The Negative Effect

The slides become the training rather than supporting the training.

The Ramifications

■ For the Facilitator

- Becomes a narrator instead of a facilitator
- Relies on reading slides rather than creating engagement
- Feels tied to the screen
- Has little support when learners ask questions

■ For Learners

- Quickly disengage because they can read faster than the presenter can speak
- Lose opportunities to hear stories, examples, and practical insights
- Feel like they are attending a presentation rather than a learning experience

- For the Organization
 - Lower knowledge retention
 - Reduced training effectiveness
 - Learners question the value of attending live sessions

Use the guide to provide:

- 

[illegible]

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #3: No Timing or Flow Control

There is no guidance for how long lessons, activities, discussions, or debriefs should take.

How To Fix

Include timing estimates for:

- Modules & Lessons
- Activities
- Breaks
- Debriefs
- Discussions
- Roleplays



Mistake #3: No Timing or Instructional Flow Control

There is no guidance for how long lessons, activities, discussions, or debriefs should take.

The Negative Effect

Time becomes the enemy rather than a managed resource.

The Ramifications

- For the Facilitator
 - Constantly worries about time
 - Rushes key concepts
 - Skips activities at the last minute
 - Ends sessions either too early or too late

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

- For Learners
 - Feel rushed through important discussions
 - Miss essential practice opportunities
 - Experience uneven pacing
 - Become frustrated when activities are cut short
- For the Organization
 - Learning objectives are inconsistently achieved
 - Multi-session programs become difficult to schedule
 - Participants may leave with significant knowledge gaps

How to Fix It

Include timing estimates for:

- Content delivery
- Activities
- Discussions
- Debriefs
- Breaks

Also indicate:

- Must-do activities
 - Optional activities
 - Time-compression strategies
-

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings visible.

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #4: Lack of Facilitator Instructions

The facilitator guide contains content but not guidance.

How To Fix

Make sure to add the following:

- Facilitation Notes
- Producer Cues
- Questions & Responses
- Important Notes
- Transition Statements
- Common Learner Responses



Mistake #4: Lack of Facilitator Instructions

The guide contains content but not guidance.

The Negative Effect

Facilitators must guess how the designer intended the session to be delivered.

The Ramifications

- For the Facilitator
 - Experiences anxiety and uncertainty
 - Has to improvise transitions and explanations
 - Produces inconsistent delivery
 - May accidentally skip critical teaching points

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

- For New Facilitators
 - Steep learning curve
 - Longer preparation times
 - Reduced confidence
 - Greater dependence on SMEs or experienced trainers
- For Learners
 - Different classes receive different experiences
 - Important concepts may receive insufficient attention
 - Activities may be run incorrectly
- For the Organization
 - Training quality becomes facilitator-dependent
 - Certification or compliance programs become difficult to standardize
 - Organizational knowledge remains trapped with a few experienced facilitators

How to Fix It

Add:

- Facilitation notes
 - Producer Cues
 - Important Notes
 - Debrief questions
 - Transition statements
 - Common learner responses
-

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, typical of notebook or legal stationery. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #5: Ignoring Activities and Engagement

The facilitator guide focuses exclusively on presenting information.

How To Fix

Make sure to include some the following:

- Reflection Activities
- Group Discussions
- Polls
- Practice Exercises
- Scenario Activities
- Participant Guide Page Numbers



Mistake #5: Ignoring Activities and Engagement

The guide focuses exclusively on presenting information.

The Negative Effect

Learners become passive consumers rather than active participants.

The Ramifications

■ For Learners

- Increased distraction and multitasking
- Reduced attention span
- Lower retention
- Limited opportunities to practice skills

■ For Facilitators

- Must work harder to maintain energy
- Struggle to gauge learner understanding
- Receive fewer questions and interactions

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

- For the Organization

- Lower transfer of learning to the workplace
- Reduced behavior change
- Less measurable performance improvement

Research consistently shows that people learn more effectively when they discuss, practice, reflect, and apply concepts rather than simply listen.

How to Fix It

Include:

- Reflection activities
- Group discussions
- Polls
- Practice exercises
- Scenario activities

Participant Guide page references



Capture Your Notes

[illegible]

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

Mistake #6: One-Size-Fits-All (No Adaptability)

The facilitator guide assumes every delivery environment, learner group, and facilitator situation will be identical.

How To Fix

Build adaptation guidance into the guide, such as:

If Short on Time:

- Provide instructions on key material
- What can be omitted

For Experienced Learners

- Provide instructions on what can be glossed over or skipped to

For Large Groups

- Convert discussion into a polling activity
- Flipcharts to whiteboards



Mistake #6: One-Size-Fits-All (No Adaptability)

The guide assumes every delivery environment, learner group, and facilitator situation will be identical.

The Negative Effect

Facilitators cannot adapt without breaking the course.

The Ramifications

■ For the Facilitator

- Panics when time changes
- Struggles with unexpected learner needs
- Has no guidance for virtual delivery, large groups, or compressed schedules

■ For Learners

- Experience training that doesn't fit their context
- Feel activities are irrelevant or poorly matched to their needs
- Become frustrated when facilitators cannot adapt effectively

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)

■ For the Organization

- Requires multiple versions of the same course
- Increases redevelopment costs
- Reduces scalability across audiences and delivery modes

How to Fix It

Build adaptation guidance into the guide:

If short on time...

- Use Activity B instead of Activity C.

For experienced learners...

- Skip introductory discussion and move directly to application.

For virtual delivery...

- Replace table discussions with breakout rooms.

For large groups...

- Convert discussion into a polling activity.



Capture Your Notes

Common Mistake (and How to Avoid Them)



Which of these mistakes creates the biggest problem in the facilitator guides you see most often?

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Which one creates the most serious consequences for the learner?

[illegible]

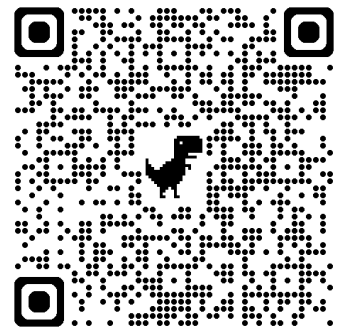
Building with LeaderGuide Pro

Building a Facilitator Guide with LeaderGuide Pro



Watch Previous Learning Event

[From Slides to Facilitator Guide in 5 Minutes](#)



Q&A & Wrap-Up



Capture Your Notes

Q&A & Wrap-Up



Key Takeaways

- Facilitator guides help create consistent delivery across instructors.
- A repeatable process makes guide development easier to scale.
- Strong guides improve the learning experience by making activities, timing, transitions, and debriefs intentional.



What is one thing you will improve in your next facilitator guide?

Q&A & Wrap-Up

Next Steps

1

Review Additional Resources

2

Try LeaderGuide Pro for Free

3

Schedule Demo or Support Session



Next Steps:

- Review additional resources on the [Great Circle Learning](#) website
- Download the [LeaderGuide Pro free trial](#)
- [Schedule a demo](#) or [support session](#) to explore tools that can streamline guide creation.



QR Codes

<u>GCL Website</u>	<u>LGP Free Trial</u>	<u>Schedule Demo</u>	<u>Support Session</u>