

THE ROLE OF THE "IM BROKER"

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October 25, 1990

The role of the "IM Broker" (i.e., the person who plays the Broker role in planning and conducting group work sessions using Interactive Management) is described.

To understand this role thoroughly, it is necessary to understand how this role relates to Interactive Management as a whole, and how this role relates to at least one other role. Accordingly, a brief discussion of Interactive Management is given first. Then the relationship of the IM Broker role to the IM Facilitator role is discussed. The importance of the interactions between these two roles is stressed. Then the IM Facilitator role is discussed to lay a basis for an in-depth discussion of the IM Broker role.

1. Interactive Management. Interactive Management is a specialized system of management aimed at collaborative group effort to resolve complex issues or to construct designs of systems aimed at overcoming complex problems.

Interactive Management has been very thoroughly defined and has been subjected to widespread testing. The workshops that use Interactive Management differ dramatically from ordinary meetings of conversational groups. Many of the problems that are often noticeable in conversational groups are absent from group activity based in Interactive Management. For this reason, judgments made by executives concerning IM activity are usually ill-founded, because they are based in experience with conversational groups.

Interactive Management is the methodological implementation of the science of generic design. The foundations and theory from this science determine the methodologies, roles, and working environment for implementation of Interactive Management.

2. Two Demanding Roles. The two most demanding roles in carrying out Interactive Management workshops are the IM Broker and the IM Facilitator. Success in group work involving complex issues is heavily dependent on these two roles. While each role has certain responsibilities that must be borne individually, some of the responsibilities for success require close collaboration and cooperative interrelationships between the IM Broker and the IM Facilitator.

3. Interactive Management and Client Organizations. Interactive Management is made possible by a trained staff who specialize in this work. Clients may come from many different fields of

endeavor. Successful use of IM means that a tight and well-thought out connection must be made between the IM staff and the Client Organization. IM staff will seldom be knowledgeable of the Client Organization, its personnel, its problems, or its goals. **The IM Broker has the responsibility to instruct the IM staff concerning the Client Organization.**

The IM Broker will be a person who is intimately familiar with the Client Organization by virtue of being an employee (or possibly a recently-retired former employee) of that organization. **This intimate knowledge of the Client Organization is one of the two key requirements to qualify someone to serve as an IM Broker.**

The other key requirement of the IM Broker is **a willingness to take some instruction in the success factors required for application of Interactive Management, and to reflect that instruction in working with the Client Organization.**

In interacting with the Client Organization, the IM Broker must operate in both a proactive mode to make certain things happen and in a protective position to prevent certain things from happening. The ability of the IM Broker to do both will be critical to the success of the IM Broker in the role, as well as to the success of the Workshop and to the implementation of workshop results in the Client Organization.

What the IM Broker does proactively in the Client Organization before the workshop occurs cannot, by itself, guarantee the success of the workshop. What the IM Broker fails to do protectively in the Client Organization before the workshop occurs can, by itself, largely guarantee the failure of the workshop.

4. The IM Facilitator. The IM Facilitator is responsible for all of the activity carried out in an IM Workshop. However the IM Facilitator must begin the workshop with the prior conditions that have been set by the IM Broker, acting cooperatively with the IM Facilitator. The IM Facilitator bases his plan for the workshop on the expectation that the IM Broker has carried out both the proactive and protective responsibilities successfully. Based on these expectations, the IM Facilitator has prepared a workshop plan that has been agreed to by the IM Broker--not the other way around.

The IM Facilitator controls the process of the IM Workshop completely. If any change is suggested in the workshop plan or process, the change will be determined by the IM Facilitator. In making this decision, the IM Facilitator expects to draw on the knowledge and good will of the IM Broker. For this to be possible, **the IM Broker must be present throughout the Workshop as an observer.**

The IM Facilitator conducts various IM processes with a group of participants selected by the IM Broker, using certain

Broker #1
Attribute

Broker #2
Attribute

Broker
Action Modes
• Proactive
• Protective

Broker Tasks
• Sale of Product
• Arrange Funds
• Use of Product
• Manage exec. expectations

Facil. Act's
• Workshop Plan
• Joint acceptance of Plan
• Process Control
• Conduct Process
• Joint criteria for partic.
• Joint design of context

Broker
Presence

Executive
• His goals
• No other constraints

criteria that have been mutually agreed to before the workshop begins. This agreement between the IM Broker and the IM Facilitator is based on (a) the prolonged experience of the IM Facilitator in conducting IM workshops with many organizations on many complex issues and (b) the IM Broker's intimate knowledge of the Client Organization and of the candidate participants. The combined knowledge of IM Broker and IM Facilitator enables them collectively to make wise decisions concerning the participant group, helping to assure that the group reflects concerns sufficiently broad to match the goals of the workshop, and that there are few, if any, built in conflicts of interests coming with the participants that might threaten the success of the workshop.

The IM Facilitator chooses the process sequence that seems best suited to achieve the workshop goals. In order to do this, the IM Facilitator must be made fully aware of the **context** of the workshop, as seen by the Client Organization. Also the IM Facilitator needs to know the **anticipated use of the products** of the workshop. This information must be supplied to the IM Facilitator by the IM Broker.

5. **Planning for Success: Quality Control.** Any individual or organization who has been producing a certain kind of product for many years will have in mind the necessary conditions for success. In order to create and sustain these conditions, the individual or organization may set certain standards for quality control. Both of these statements just made apply to Interactive Management. The necessary conditions for success are known, and the requirements for control of quality are likewise known.

6. **The IM Broker and the Executive.** It is essential that the IM Broker become aware of planning for success and quality control, as exercised in conducting Interactive Management workshops. The IM Broker must have the intestinal fortitude to honor these ideas and, if necessary, to make these matters known to the executive in the Client Organization. It is almost always true that the IM Broker is **not** the executive who is seeking value from the application of Interactive Management. The IM Broker must be aware of the high probability that the executive does not understand IM and is not interested in understanding IM. Because of this the IM Broker must not place the executive at risk by allowing the executive to impose mindless constraints on the IM activity that might be imposed because the executive is accustomed to attending meetings run by people who do not know how to manage group activity and who do not impose quality standards on the planning and conduct of Interactive Management work. **The likely outcome of inappropriate constraints by the executive on the IM workshop is failure of the workshop caused by the executive's imposition of the constraints.**

The IM staff are acutely conscious of the fact that executive judgments of success are often based on incorrect expectations. **The IM Broker must control very carefully the expectations that the executive develops during the period prior to the conduct of an IM workshop.**

It is the goal of the IM staff that the executive and the IM staff will both find the workshop to be successful. Moreover it is the goal of the IM staff that whatever accrues from the workshop will be implemented in the Client Organization. This requires that the executive accept the judgment of the IM staff concerning the amount of time required to assure a high-quality product. This judgment cannot be reliably made before the workshop begins, because it depends on factors that no one can control. The only way to assure success under these conditions is to allow a flexible duration to the project. This may require that the initial workshop be followed by additional workshops until the final result is achieved. If the executive cannot accept this fact of life, the workshop should not be conducted. It is the responsibility of the IM Broker to make sure that the executive understands this. **High-quality work cannot be forced, but it can be assured if patience is seen as a virtue.**

7. Proactive Duties of the IM Broker. The IM Broker must carry out these proactive duties in the Client Organization:

- o Develop a clear statement of the workshop goals
- o Develop a clear statement of the context within which the work is to be carried out
- o Develop the working agreement between the Client Organization and the IM staff
- o Develop the budget for the work and get agreement on the budget from the Client Organization and the IM staff
- o Select the candidate participants for the workshop, based on the criteria mutually developed by the IM Broker and the IM Facilitator
- o Inform the candidate participants about the workshop, determine their willingness to participate in a workshop of the type planned, and coordinate the paperwork and schedules in the Client Organization
- o Inform the IM staff of the names, titles, and responsibilities of the workshop participants
- o Advise the participants of the IM Broker's role in the workshop and of the IM Facilitator's role in the workshop

PROACTIVE
DUTIES

- o Brief the executive on the plan and the quality control, and make sure that the executive's expectations align with what can realistically be anticipated

8. **Protective Duties of the IM Broker.** The IM Broker must protect the IM Facilitator and staff from the following:

PROTECTIVE
DUTIES

- o Imposition of constraints that are not consistent with the success plan and IM quality control
- o Invasion of the IM process by the Client Organization
- o Development of unrealistic expectations within the Client Organization

9. **Collaborative Duties of the IM Broker.**

The IM Broker must collaborate with the IM Facilitator in determining the following:

COLLABORATIVE
DUTIES

- o The context of the workshop
- o The goals of the workshop
- o The process sequence plan for the workshop
- o The product plan for the workshop (what will be delivered at its conclusion)
- o The trigger questions planned for the workshop
- o The generic questions planned for the workshop
- o The workshop location
- o The workshop duration
- o Participant living accommodations
- o Participant local transportation accommodations
- o Workshop budget
- o Meal schedules and plans
- o Special problems
- o Contingency plans
- o Workshop followup activity