WHAT TO BUILD FIRST?
FACILITATOR OR PARTICIPANT GUIDE
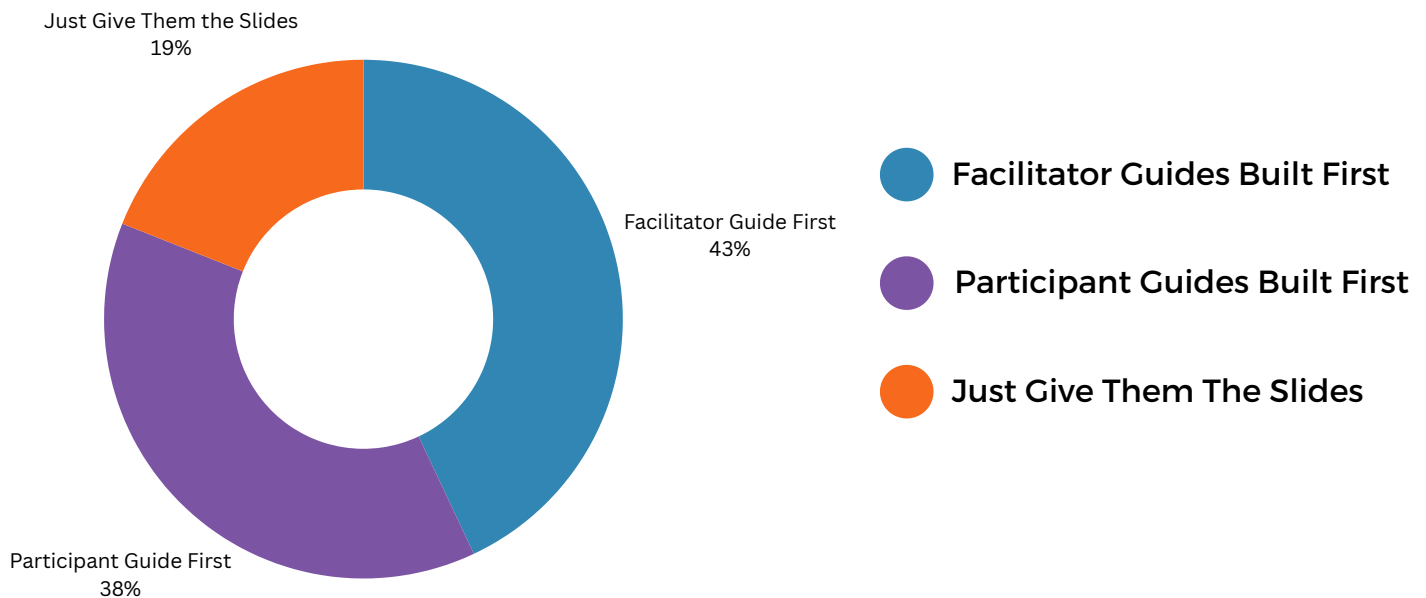
Are you ready to start building your training program but not sure where to start? Do you need a facilitator guidebook or a participant guide?

We're here to help you figure out which one you should build first.

GUIDEBOOK TRENDS IN L&D

Just Give Them the Slides
19%

Facilitator Guide First
43%

Participant Guide First
38%

- Facilitator Guides Built First
- Participant Guides Built First
- Just Give Them The Slides

When crafting guidebooks, three factions emerge. While two of these hold merit, the third (merely providing the slide deck to facilitators and participants) must be eliminated from the realm of options.

Lets dive into which camp you may fall into and why you may want to consider the other option. Keep in mind that you don't have to stick to a single option. You may build the facilitator guide first for one project and build the participant guide first for another.

Please just don't give the facilitators and participants the slide deck!

THE PARTICIPANT GUIDE FIRST

Who Belongs in this Faction?

1 **People Who Deliver Their Own Classes**

For these folks, a facilitator guide rarely gets built at all. Instead, a few instructor notes might be added to the teachers' copy of the participant guide; the theory being "I wrote the class, so I know how to teach it."

2 **Developers Who Are Subject Matter Experts**

Their focus is on delivering information to the end user – the learner, rather than on teaching per se, and thus, they often see no need to develop a teaching plan or a facilitator guide.

3 **Developers Who Are Pressed For Time**

It's much easier and faster to pull together some handouts and step-action lists for the participants than it is to write out exactly what the instructors are to say and do.

Pro's & Con's to Building Participant Guide First

Pro's

Clarity in Content

Developing the participant guide first can help clarify the content and ensure it is presented logically and coherently.

User-Centric Approach

Focusing on the participant guide prioritizes the needs and perspectives of the learners.

Con's

Information Dump

The participant guide is often little more than a collection of information.

Alignment Challenges

The facilitator guide may require changes if the participant guide does not match the facilitator's approach or if issues arise during participant sessions.

Resource Allocation

Creating a comprehensive participant guide first may require significant resources and result in additional time and effort when changes are needed.

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THE FACILITATOR GUIDE FIRST

Who Belongs in this Faction?

1 **Instructional Designers**

For those who like to start with learning objectives and an instructional design document or are just following the ADDIE model.

2 **Developers Building Complex Training Programs**

Be it for corporate, governmental, or academic, having the ability to fully document what is needed to ensure all vital information is covered and possibly maintain their accreditation.

3 **Developers Supporting Large Number of Facilitators**

The goal is to have consistent training across multiple facilitators, locations, and/or sessions; you cannot afford to assume that every instructor can work from a participant guide or your slide deck.

Pro's & Con's to Building Facilitator Guide First

Pro's

Structured Delivery
The facilitator guide sets the structure for the training sessions, providing a roadmap for facilitators to follow. This can contribute to a more organized and effective delivery of the content.

Customization for Audience
Content can be tailored to the needs and dynamics of the participant group. This adaptability can enhance the learning experience and address participants' unique questions or concerns.

Pro's

Easier Participant Guide Creation
From a well-constructed Facilitator Guide comes a Participant Guide with minimal additional work

Integration of Learning Activities
Developing the facilitator guide first allows for integrating these elements into the training program.

Con's

Resource Allocation
Creating a well-formatted facilitator guide can take time, money & workforce allocation..

OUR RECOMMENDATION

Build the Facilitator Guide First

A well-constructed and formatted facilitator guide will follow the flow of the class, step-by-step. The instructional flow is not obvious when you start with the participant guide. The participant guide will be able to be created with minimal additional work as it will be logically and structurally synced with the facilitator guide.

Simple Tips to Start a Facilitator Guide

Organize your facilitator guide to follow the logical flow of preparing for and then delivering the program to the learners. A good rule of thumb is to assume that the facilitator does NOT know what you know.

1 Map to your Learning Objectives

Use your terminal and enabling learning objectives to set up your modules/topics and lessons/sub-topics. As you do this, dependency will become obvious.

Even though you've written your objectives logically, as you begin writing your instruction, it will be easy to see if certain objectives need to be taught before others.

2 Start each module/topic with an overview

The module overview is a high-level look at what is happening in the module to get the participant to the learning objective. The over should include:

- The learning objective/goal
- Time allotment
- A brief description of the instructional process
- The list of materials needed
- Resources or References

Simple Tips to Start a Facilitator Guide, cont'd

3 **Begin Each Lesson with Goal & Enabling Objective**

Organize your facilitator guide to follow the logical flow of preparing for and then delivering the program to the learners. A good rule of thumb is to assume that the facilitator does NOT know what you know.

What is a SMART Goal?

Facilitator	Notes
Cumulative time: 0 hours, 17 minutes Time to complete this lesson: 5 minutes	
Objective: After completing the lesson on Smart Goals, the learner will be able to create a goal that meets all the conditions of SMART with 100% accuracy.	

4 **Follow the logical flow of the class as you write**

Slide 1

Time: 1 min

Say:

Welcome to this session about creating SMART goals. My name is _____, and I look forward to working with you to create better goals.

Click to Continue...

SMART Goals

Slide 2

Time: 4 min

Ask:

What is a SMART Goal?

Capture responses on a flipchart:

Say:

SMART is a best practice framework for setting goals.

By setting a goal, an individual is making a roadmap for a specific target. The elements in the framework work together to create a goal that is carefully and thoughtfully planned out, executable and trackable.

The acronym is intended to help clarify exactly what will be required for achieving success and to be able to share that clarification with others in regards to the goal.

Click to Continue...

What are SMART goals?

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TIPS FROM THE PROS

Write Out Exactly What the Facilitator Needs to Say and Do

For example: If you direct the facilitator to explain something, include either a script or the key points of what you expect the explanation to cover.

Four Benefits of using SMART Goals

1. Helps you visualize your specific goals.
2. Refines your decision-making skills.
3. Measures your progress.
4. Can expose weaknesses.

Say something like:

Digging into these benefits:

- SMART goals can help you break down your big, broad dreams into a series of specific, actionable steps, and micro-goals.
- SMART criteria can help you evaluate which steps will be most effective in achieving what you want.
- With SMART goal setting, you can measure tangible progress toward your achievable goals. This can help you figure out which tactics will be most efficient in getting you what you want.
- The SMART goal system can help you assess any roadblocks to your success, including timing, time management, or setting the bar too high.

Include Timing for Significant Actions Within a Lesson

Slide 2

Ask:

What is a SMART Goal?

Capture responses on a flipchart:

Time: 4 min

What are SMART goals?

Be Consistent

Keep your formatting and page layouts the same so that your facilitator guide is visually easy to follow

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FINAL THOUGHTS

Why settle for an "okay" delivery when you could aim for a spectacular one?

A concise yet comprehensive facilitator guide guarantees consistent delivery, no matter who leads the charge. Even if your team of facilitators is seasoned and knowledgeable, scripting every word is the key to success.

This guide will not only ensure a top-notch performance, but it will also make you look like a rockstar. By going the extra mile, you'll shine brighter than the rest. Who wouldn't want that?

Develop instructor-led training quickly and easily

LeaderGuide Pro

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- Save money when developing training
- Increase consistency in training
- Create professionally formatted facilitator guides & participant guides

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