

DECISION SCIENCES INSTITUTE ANNUAL MEETING GUIDELINES FOR SESSION FACILITATORS

Thank you for serving as a session facilitator for the 2004 Annual Meeting of the Decision Sciences Institute in Boston. You play an important role in the exchange of ideas that is at the heart of this conference. To help you prepare for this role, we offer this set of guidelines.

Paper presentation sessions, typically 1½ hours in duration, allow for brief introduction of presenters, about 20 minutes for each of three presentations, and 5-10 minutes of audience discussion for each presentation.

The duties of a session facilitator include:

- be at the designated meeting room 10 minutes before the scheduled start to identify participants, answer questions, etc.;
- welcome attendees and introduce session with a brief overview, indicating the session title and how papers are related (if relevant);
- introduce participants;
- enforce time limits strictly – no author or attendee should monopolize program time which rightfully belongs to another participant; be congenial, but firm on this point; and
- lead discussion on the presentations.

1. TAKE YOUR RESPONSIBILITY SERIOUSLY

Session facilitators serve a dual role in that they chair the session and lead discussion on the presentations. You should contact all corresponding authors in your session at least one month prior to the annual meeting to request updated copies of papers or relevant information, which you then will distribute to all presenters. It is highly desirable that every presenter receives copies of papers before the conference to stimulate discussion at the session.

The insights of good session facilitators make the conference sessions more valuable for both the

audience and the presenters. We hope you will take your responsibility seriously. If you are unable to attend the session to which you have been assigned, please find someone to take your place, give him or her enough time to do the job properly, and please inform the Track Chair of the change in a timely manner. Your Track Chair may be of assistance in helping you to find a qualified substitute.

2. YOUR COMMENTS SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTIVE

As you lead discussion on the presentations, your comments should be honest and objective, but they also should be useful and constructive. It is not enough simply to say that the paper was good or bad and sit down. Rather, examine the strengths and weaknesses of the paper, how it might be improved, the implications of the major findings, and what further work might be done in the area. Above all, your remarks should be designed to stimulate the audience interest in the subject and provide constructive feedback for the author.

3. PREPARE EARLY

Preparing to be a good session facilitator takes time. Your comments should provide an informed, objective evaluation, and this requires that you be thoroughly familiar with the paper as well as related work. Don't wait until a few days before the conference to prepare.

4. SUPPORT YOUR COMMENTS WITH APPROPRIATE VISUAL AIDS

Most speakers at the Institute's annual meetings use PowerPoint projections or overhead transparencies to help reinforce and clarify their presentations. Session facilitators can use these if desired.

We hope you will find these guidelines helpful in serving as an effective session facilitator for the 2004 Annual Meeting. Good luck and enjoy the conference.