

Running Effective Meetings

Meetings are vital for management and communication. Properly run meetings save time, increase motivation, productivity, and solve problems. Meetings create new ideas and initiatives. Meetings achieve buy-in. Meetings prevent 'not invented here' syndrome. Meetings diffuse conflict in a way that emails and memos cannot.

Hold meetings, even if it's difficult to justify the time. Plan, run and follow up meetings properly, and they will repay the cost many times over. Hold meetings to manage teams and situations, and achieve your objectives quicker, easier, at less cost. Hold effective meetings to make people happier and more productive. Brainstorming meetings are immensely powerful for team-building, creativity, decision-making and problem-solving. But do it properly. Badly run meetings waste time, money, resources, and are worse than having no meetings at all. So learn these simple rules and use them.

Meetings - Basic Rules

1. Plan - use the agenda as a planning tool (see 'POSTAD TV' acronym below)
2. Circulate agenda in advance
3. Run the meeting - keep control, agree outcomes, actions and responsibilities, take notes
4. Write and circulate notes
5. Follow up agreed actions and responsibilities

-Meetings come in all shapes and sizes, and for lots of purposes-

Meeting purposes include:

- giving information
- training
- discussion (leading to an objective)
- generating ideas
- planning, workshops
- consulting and getting feedback
- finding solutions/solving problems
- crisis management
- performance reporting/assessment
- setting targets and objectives
- setting tasks and delegating
- making decisions
- conveying /clarifying policy issues
- team building
- motivating
- special subjects - guest speakers

The acronym **POSTAD TV** shows you how to plan effective meetings, and particularly how to construct the meeting agenda, and then notify the meeting delegates:

**Priorities, Outcomes,
Sequence, Timings,
Agenda, Date, Time,
Venue.**

Meeting Priorities

What is the meeting's purpose? Always have one; otherwise don't have a meeting. Decide the issues for inclusion in the meeting and their relative priority: importance and urgency.

You can avoid the pressure for 'Any Other Business' at the end of the meeting if you circulate a draft agenda in advance of the meeting, and ask for any other items for consideration. ('Any Other Business' often creates a free-for-all session that wastes time, and gives rise to new tricky expectations, which if not managed properly then closes the meeting on a negative note.)

Meeting Outcomes

Decide what outcome (i.e. what is the purpose) you seek for each issue, and put this on the agenda alongside the item heading. This is important as people need to know what is expected of them, and each item will be more productive with a clear aim at the outset. Typical outcomes are:

- Decision
- Discussion
- Information
- Planning (eg. workshop session)
- Generating ideas
- Getting feedback
- Finding solutions
- Agreeing (targets, budgets, aims, etc)
- Policy statement
- Team-building/motivation
- Guest speaker - information, initiatives, etc



Meeting Sequence

Put the less important issues at the top of the agenda, not the bottom. If you put them on the bottom you may never get to them. Ensure any urgent issues are placed up the agenda. Non-urgent items place down the agenda - if you are going to miss any you can more easily afford to miss these.

Try to achieve a varied sequence - don't put all the heavy controversial items together - mix it up.

***Be Organized and Stay Motivated...
with that in mind you will engage all those attending!***