

QUICK TIPS – MEETINGS

The world is filled with meetings and most of them are quite unsatisfying events. Here are some ideas for making your meetings more productive and fulfilling.

Objective

Rather than engaging in a somnolent organizational ritual, meetings should be dynamic and should serve specific objectives. The leader and the group need to define this clearly and adhere to it.

Attendees also should develop personal objectives that transcend “surviving the ordeal”. What do you want to get out of this meeting?

Code of Conduct

The group should discuss and agree upon a *Code of Conduct*. Is punctuality important? Is it appropriate to be text messaging or on a Blackberry? Are side conversations and whispering permitted?

Establishing the ground rules provides an important reference to help keep the group functioning effectively and serves as a non-personal adjustment mechanism if behaviour drifts from the standard.

Agenda

Develop and circulate the *Agenda* prior to the meeting. The *Agenda* should identify start and finish times, and *Items* for discussion, with allocated time.

A consideration is to group the *Items* by categories, such as:

- ◆ Information Only
- ◆ Discussion and Problem Solving
- ◆ Decision Required

Minutes

The *Minutes* of a meeting are developed to describe the discussions that transpired, to document the decisions that were made and to identify the items requiring action.

Writing up the *Minutes*, though, seems to be something that we all like to avoid. Don't defer this responsibility. You will have to compose the *Minutes* eventually, so it is best to do so within 48 hours of the meeting, while events are still fresh in your mind. This also provides ample time for those who have been delegated to deal with the *Action Items*.



These simple steps can significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of your meetings, and reverse the fatiguing effect most meetings have on employees. It doesn't sound that hard, so give it a try.

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