

## Most Frequently Asked Questions for Meeting Management

### Q. When is a meeting necessary?

A. When deciding whether or not to hold a meeting, consider the following questions listed below. Sometimes it is more effective to send an email, memo, or hold a one-on-one meeting instead of holding a team meeting.

- ✓ Is it the best use of our time?
- ✓ Is there a problem that needs to be solved?
- ✓ Are there group concerns that need to be shared?
- ✓ Is there complex information that needs to be disseminated or shared?
- ✓ Is there a decision that needs to be made?
- ✓ Do we need a face-to-face to reconnect?

### Q. What are the most important elements to consider when conducting a meeting?

A. When conducting a meeting we sometimes get so focused on our tasks that we forget about the needs of our meeting participants. Meetings are empowering and a great way to communicate within the organization. The following is a list of the most important elements to consider when conducting a meeting:

**Efficient** - Make sure your meetings are efficient so that people view them as a good use of their time.

**Positive and interesting** - So people enjoy themselves and look forward to the next meeting.

**Participative** - So everyone participates equally, instead of just zoning out or faking agreement.

**Informative** - So that the participants feel that they received new information.

**Open** - So people say what they think during the meeting, rather than privately after the meeting.

**Creative** - So the thinking goes beyond the usual and into new territory.

### Q. What is the process to preparing for an effective meeting?

A. Remember the acronym M.A.P. You need to M.A.P. out your meeting by defining the **Method, Area, and People**.

- ✓ **Method** – identify the purpose of the meeting, what you are trying to achieve, and the type of meeting (such as problem solving vs. information sharing).
- ✓ **Area** – refers to the room size and environment factors. In addition, consider the materials that will be needed for the meeting such as memos, pens, paper, etc.
- ✓ **People** – consider the people that will participate in the meeting. Inviting the right people can directly affect motivation to participate.



**Q. How much time should I spend preparing for a meeting?**

A. Preparation requires more time commitment than the actual meeting. The ideal meeting is composed of 80% preparation and 20% facilitation. While conducting the meeting is important, it is even more important to be prepared so that you achieve productive meetings.

**Q. What is the first thing that should be done at the beginning of a meeting?**

A. At the beginning of every meeting, remember the 3 I's: **inform, inspire, involve.**

- ✓ **Inform** participants of why they are at the meeting.
- ✓ **Inspire** by explaining why it is important to have the meeting and how it affects them. Let your participants know that their inputs are important to the decision-making.
- ✓ **Involve** them in the process so they have a voice in the matter.

**Q. How do I formally open a meeting?**

A. Have an **agenda** and share it so your participants are aware of the topics the meeting will cover. The agenda is a brief overview of the purpose of the meeting clearly outlined for the participants. This will also hold off questions until the relevant topic is discussed.

**Q. What should a meeting facilitator take into account at meetings?**

A. The role of a meeting facilitator is to effectively guide the meeting in the desired direction. The meeting facilitator serves a number of responsibilities that include but are not limited to the following: a **motivator** to encourage participation, a **bridge builder** to negotiate for the group, a **clairvoyant** that is able to read the audience and pick up on non-verbal cues, a **peacemaker**, a **taskmaster** to redirect if off topic, a **praiser** to motivate and provide reinforcement as well as a **listener** to achieve the goal of the meeting.

**Q. How do I manage dysfunctional behavior?**

A. Remember that **dysfunctional behavior** is an act by a person and not a personality trait. Dysfunctional behavior is any activity by a participant which is consciously or unconsciously a substitution for expressing displeasure with information being generated by the meeting or the way in which the session is being run. Focus on the behavior and not the person in three steps:

- ✓ **Conscious prevention:** If you anticipate problematic behavior, address it before the meeting, rather than waiting for the meeting and hoping it does not happen.
- ✓ **Early detection:** Use of **ground rules** can help to curb ineffective behavior. Keep your feelers open in the beginning of the meeting so that you can address any issues quickly. The longer dysfunctional behavior goes unaddressed, the more difficult it is to turnaround.
- ✓ **Clean resolution:** Make sure the root cause of the dysfunction is addressed and resolved. For example, someone may be texting in the meeting and rather than just



creating a “no texting” rule, check in with them to see if there is something pressing that they need to attend to.

**Q. How do I formally close out a meeting?**

A. The closing of a meeting is just as important as the opening of a meeting. The following is a quick four step process to effectively close meetings:

- ✓ **Review** – summarize the issues/information discussed in the meeting, and reiterate the main takeaways of what was covered.
- ✓ **Evaluate** – get input from the group on the processes used, the results obtained, and the performance against the objectives.
- ✓ **Close** – thank the participants for attending, and provide a quick snapshot of what the next steps will be.
- ✓ **Next Steps** – follow-up with the tasks that were assigned during the meeting to ensure that you are achieving the results you wanted.

**Q. What do I do once the meeting is adjourned?**

A. Adjourning the meeting dismisses the participants, but does not actually end the meeting. Any points that were brought up during the meeting must be followed-through. A great way to follow-through is to provide meeting minutes, monitor participants’ progress on assigned tasks, and keep participants informed of the developments related to the meeting.

**Q. What are meeting Ground Rules and when are they necessary?**

**Ground rules** are statements of values and guidelines which a group establishes to help individual members decide how to act. They are usually decided upon by the whole group at the beginning of a project. They can also be used for a single meeting, when the topic is particularly sensitive or intense. Ground rules can also be implemented later in a project if participants are exhibiting dysfunctional behavior and the meetings are not progressing successfully.

**Q. What are Meeting Minutes and when are they necessary?**

**Meeting minutes** are the written record of what occurred at a particular meeting. They typically describe the events of the meeting, including a list of attendees, a statement of the issues considered by the participants, and related responses or decisions for the issues.

