

## Ten Top Tips for Managing Meetings!

### 1. BE CLEAR ON WHY YOU NEED TO ATTEND!

Many meetings do not need to take place at all – they can be handled offline via a phone call or an e mail exchange. Meetings can be costly in both time and money so make sure you have considered all possible alternatives before you agree to attend.

### 2. BE CLEAR ON WHAT WOULD CONSTITUTE “ A SUCCESSFUL MEETING”

Think about what outcomes would allow you to consider the meeting a success. Are you clear on the objectives of the meeting and are you sure that the right people are attending who can deliver these outcomes? If not, why not suggest some changes?

### 3. BE WELL PREPARED

Make sure you have read the Minutes from the previous meeting and check what actions are down to you. This needs to be done in good time so plan it into your diary – there is nothing more frustrating than people attending meetings who are not properly prepared – this seriously impacts on the probability of a successful meeting!

### 4. YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

As chairperson do remember that you are in charge of the meeting. The success of the meeting can depend heavily on your leadership of the meeting, the time management and especially the engagement of participants – be prepared to take charge as needed. As a participant you also have a responsibility to help the meeting be a success – you need to help steer the discussion to help the chairperson and raise any issues that you feel might impact a successful outcome. Sitting quietly and complaining afterwards is not a good idea.

### 5. BE CLEAR ON THE MEETING OBJECTIVES UPFRONT

It is important that everyone around the table is clear about the reason for the meeting and have a common idea of what a successful outcome would be. Be prepared, as chairperson, to outline these objectives upfront and make sure others agree or you may need to tune the objectives or think about rescheduling with the appropriate attendees.

## **6. BE PUNCTUAL**

As chairperson, make sure the meeting starts and finishes on time – you are in charge. As participant make sure you arrive in good time and interject if you feel the meeting is dragging and needs to pick up momentum to finish on time. Too many meetings can be very wasteful of people's time due to poor chairing so make sure you have a reputation for punctuality and focus.

## **7. SET OUT THE GROUND RULES UPFRONT**

It is important all attendees know how the meeting is going to be conducted. Set out the ground rules up front (perhaps a chart on the meeting room wall) and ask if anyone has any others to add to the list. It is impossible to impose the desired behaviour if people are unaware of the rules from the outset.

## **8. MAKE SURE EVERYONE AT THE MEETING HAS A CHANCE TO INPUT**

As chairperson keep a watch on who is contributing during the meeting. Ask those who are not actively involved what their views are. If somebody is monopolising the meeting seek out other views and manage appropriately.

## **9. WRITE DOWN YOUR QUESTIONS OR ISSUES**

Meetings can be difficult environments for you to calmly put a question across – you are often competing for airtime and some contributors can be overpowering. Think about your main questions and issues before the meeting and write them down and then ask them at the appropriate time during the meeting (by reading from your script!).

## **10. REVIEW THE MEETING AT THE END**

Ask all attendees if they felt that the meeting had achieved the planned outcomes discussed at the start. For those with Action Points ask them to explain the actions they are taking away – they can be quite different to those taken down by the Minute taker. Ask what would have made the meeting even more successful – all feedback is helpful!

These Managing Meeting tips were provided by [Ian Clarke and Steve Westall](#) who are the authors of [A Useful Guide to Managing Meetings](#).

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