
Conducting Effective Meetings: Making Meetings Work

Course Overview

Are you were frustrated with the way meetings are going? Do they lack focus? Are there times some members of the group dominate the proceedings? Are you not always sure who should attend? Are you looking for a way to structure meetings to make them more effective yet at the same time maintain an open atmosphere? This one-day workshop not only covers the simple need for meeting structure, but also includes some intervention strategies.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, participants will be able to:

- Understand the value of meetings as a management tool.
- Recognize the critical pre-planning steps that makes meeting time more effective.
- How to start and end meetings on time with a well-constructed agenda.
- Identify the steps to take to create an open and safe forum for discussion.
- Identify the role of the meeting chair and the meeting participant.
- Develop and practice techniques for handling counterproductive behavior

Pre-Assignment

- Participants are asked to rate one meeting they attend, prior to the workshop, by filling out a “Meeting Effectiveness Questionnaire”

Outline

- Before the meeting
 - Laying the groundwork: when, where and why
 - Deciding who should attend
 - Developing an agenda (Group discussion to determine when is the best time for a meeting, where, and who should attend. Are there specific reasons for holding meetings rather than choosing some other forum? Group exercise: Group have various elements of an agenda. They must reconstruct the agenda. Debrief. –45 min)
- The role of the meeting chair (Large group discussion, on flip chart)
 - Your role and responsibilities
 - Leadership style and meeting success
 - Facilitation style and meeting success (What is the difference between chair and facilitator? How do their styles differ? Do their roles differ? Which is more difficult? Ask participants to read The Abilene Paradox and discuss. 45 min)
- Preparing to be the chair/leader
 - Before the meeting
 - During the meeting
 - After the meeting (Divide into small groups and develop guidelines to be posted. Debrief. 30 min)
- The role of meeting participants
 - Your role and responsibilities
 - Preparing for the meeting
 - During the meeting
 - After the meeting (What should those who attend meetings do before, during and after the meeting? Discuss-15 min)

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- Controlling meetings
 - Creating an open atmosphere
 - Questioning techniques to stimulate discussion
 - Open questions
 - Probing
 - Paraphrasing
 - Summarizing
 - Clarifying (Discussion of communication techniques, such as open questions, listening skills, and the probing funnel.-15 min)
- Dealing with difficult dynamics
 - Techniques/interventions for controlling discussion
 - Say what's going on
 - Check for agreement
 - Deal with process battles
 - Boomerang technique
 - Maintaining/regaining focus
 - Enforce process agreements
 - Encourage the quiet
 - Use group memory
 - Use body language
 - Watch how much YOU talk (Discuss the various techniques and when to use them. Then divide participants into groups where they are given ten situations and the ten techniques, and asked to match situation to technique. When groups have completed the exercise, give them preferred match-up and discuss results-45 min)
- What makes sustainable agreements?
 - Building a shared framework of understanding (Short talk with examples of agreements that have broken down, and examples of those that are sustainable-15 min)
- After the meeting
 - Meeting notes
 - Follow-up
 - Follow-through (Discussion, case study, and debrief-15 min)
- Video: Meeting the Meeting Challenge-30 min.
- Review/Personal Action Plan