



Effective Meetings Best Practices

Meetings can be highly valuable to a business or simply a waste of time. An effective meeting can be described as one which achieves goals, and involves all participants. That is easier said than done. Many meetings, through a combination of lack of planning and poor execution, are not effective. The effort that goes into planning the meeting is the key determinant of its effectiveness, and this includes much more than just preparing an agenda.

Effective meetings are the result of a three part process:

- Pre-meeting preparation
- Conducting the meeting efficiently
- Following up on the issues

This checklist is a means of ensuring that your meetings make worthwhile and lasting contributions to the effective running of your business.



BEST PRACTICE	WE DO THIS? Y/N	COMMENT
PREPARE PRIOR TO THE MEETING		
Plan out the meeting overall		Determine: who, what, when, where, why, how many?
Prepare and send out the agenda in advance		See further advice on the agenda in the section below THE AGENDA
Prepare and send out all relevant documents in advance		<p>Documents pertinent to the meeting are sent to members at least five working days before the scheduled meeting date to provide the opportunity to read and consider the matters arising.</p> <p>Contents contain all materials needed in the meeting e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda ▪ Minutes from the previous meeting ▪ Committee reports ▪ Financial reports ▪ Papers relating to specific agenda items ▪ Any other information items <p>Important items are briefly summarized indicating the reason for their importance.</p> <p>Packages are prepared to a consistent format - this makes contents easy to go through.</p>
Prepare extra copies of all meeting papers		There may be last minute invitees or others may have forgotten their papers.
Set up the meeting room in advance		See further advice on setting up the meeting room in the section below THE MEETING SPACE
MANAGE THE MEETING EFFICIENTLY		
Start on time		
Adhere to the timetable		Use the agenda to keep the meeting moving.
Ensure all attendees know each other		Special guests or new employees may need to be introduced to the regular attendees.
Agree on the decision making process		At the initial meeting specify how decisions will be made (show of hands, secret ballot etc.) and what constitutes a



		binding decision (general consensus, majority vote etc.).
After discussion of each agenda item the discussion is summarized		To avoid any misunderstanding.
After discussion of each agenda item action points are immediately noted		
After discussion of each agenda item responsibilities for carrying out any decided actions are immediately allocated		
The minutes of the meeting are kept brief		Minutes cover only the decisions that were made, the actions agreed upon, and any responsibilities for taking action decided upon.
Set the date and place of the next meeting		
Adjourn on time		If extra time seems really necessary prolong it only with the agreement of all attendees.
REPORT THE PROCEEDINGS QUICKLY		
Minutes are circulated as soon as possible after the meeting		
Non-attending stakeholders are quickly informed about decisions made		
REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEETING		
Annually attendees are surveyed as to content, format, conduct and usefulness of the meeting		
RUN AN EFFECTIVE AGENDA		
The agenda never includes more matters than can be dealt with in the allotted time for the meeting		Each agenda item is allocated a specific amount of time.
The agenda includes specific items to discuss		Rather than just a list of general areas.
The agenda includes cross references to the relevant items in the meeting papers		



<p>Meetings follow a consistent agenda</p>		<p>A typical meeting agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approval of the agenda for the meeting ▪ Approval of minutes from the previous meeting ▪ Matters to deal with ▪ Matters arising – any important issues arising after preparation of the published agenda ▪ Any other business ▪ Date/location of the next meeting
<p>The agenda is designed to progress decision making rapidly</p>		<p>List routine items sure to be accepted into a separate consent agenda section so they can be agreed upon without taking up meeting time e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Minutes from the previous meeting ▪ Reports from committees ▪ Reports from staff ▪ All other routine items that require a vote but will not need preliminary discussion <p>Provide an ‘anticipated action’ where possible for each item on the agenda. This will indicate to members that discussion will probably not be required about that item and give them the opportunity of accepting the suggested outcome.</p> <p>Lists only correspondence requiring a response by the meeting members – all other is informational only and does not require discussion.</p> <p>Items of higher priority are allocated more time than those of lower priority.</p> <p>The agenda includes a forward list of deadlines for documents (such as budgets) that will need to be dealt with by the meeting.</p> <p>The type of action required (decision, vote, or an action) is stated against each agenda item.</p>
<p>MEET IN A SUITABLE SPACE</p>		
<p>The meeting space is checked pre-meeting for comfortableness</p>		<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pleasant room temperature ▪ Adequate seating ▪ Sufficient workspace to allow room for documents and note taking by attendees
<p>The meeting space is checked pre-meeting to ensure equipment for presentations and</p>		<p>Trying to fix or replace non-functioning equipment during the meeting is a waste of meeting time:</p>



brain storming is operational		<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ White board▪ Flip chart▪ Laptop and projector▪ DVD/CD player
The meeting place is left in a presentable condition		The next user will resent having to tidy away other people's discards.