

Making meetings a productive tool

People often say that we have too many meetings and because of them we can't get stuff done.

The reality is these are critical times where team members interact and if meetings are used appropriately and conducted well a lot of good stuff gets done.

Outputs

Be clear and articulate in your agenda what the outputs will be from the meeting.

Outputs should be articulated in the past tense.

Examples:

- First draft of vision completed
- Sales strategies presented and signed off
- Marketing campaign brainstormed with next steps identified

Types of meeting

Status update meetings

The intent is to align the team by updating them on where things are at with projects or initiatives, what may be some roadblocks and where to from here.

You can include solving problems, decision making, setting priorities and assigning tasks in this meeting.

Output examples could be:

- Team updated and feedback provided
- Critical issue raised and decisions made

Note:

If one of your regular meetings is to provide an update on each of the projects going on then this meeting should be short and sharp. It is just to give people the status as to where you are on in your project plan.

Are you On track or Off track to your plan.

On track - a simple thumbs up

Off track - explain why and what you are doing to get it back on track to meet the end date you have provided.

Can use a traffic light system

Green - on track

Yellow - may be a bit off track but no concerns on getting on track or there may be some concerns which are highlighted

Red - significantly off track with some issues that need to be addressed

You may need to have a decision made or want to get some ideas that will help the project progress.

If it is a big decision and requires a lot of dialogue and interaction you should hold a separate meeting which is focused and can be done far more effectively and efficiently. (see decision meeting type).

Decision making meeting

Small decisions are made in all kinds of meetings.

The important ones should get their own dedicated meeting.

Output examples:

- CRM options presented
- Preferred CRM system confirmed and ready for board presentation

Information sharing meetings

This meeting is about sharing information on things like new products, processes, legislations etc.

Output examples:

Anti money laundering legislation explained, and document processes provided

Problem solving and brainstorming meetings

Have combined these as they are closely related, and you generally solve problems with brainstorming.

Problem solving meetings can be complex and varied so consider the scope of the problem you are looking to solve.

If it is strategizing for the future then you have choice of group processes that can be used to make the meeting effective.

If it is something major like getting Bruce to wash his bike outfit after 10 days use then another array of tools may be needed to solve it.

Make sure you choose the right people to be in this meeting.

Get people who can catalyse others and get the mind juices flowing.

Output examples:

- Solutions for talent recruitment issue brainstormed, evaluated and agreed

1 on 1

These are valuable and a direct tangible outcome does not need to be had

Use these meetings to build the relationship. Talk about career goals and how to reach them. Talk about how the work you and your team are doing fits into the business' broader strategy. Talk about where you're struggling at work and brainstorm ways to make things better. These are the types of conversations that build a trusting relationship

Helpful hints

- Use the right meeting type
- Clear agenda with outputs identified
- Ensure the right people are attending
- Provide pre reads where applicable and emphasise to attendees to come prepared
- Be disciplined and manage the meeting well.
 - Keep on track
 - Know when to cut off excessive dialogue
 - Park topics that are not in the agenda and get to them if time allows

Setting the agenda

“CREATING OUR VALUES” WORKSHOP

Date: 19 July 18

Time: 12 noon sharp

Cell phones – No cell phones unless absolutely necessary

Chair / Facilitator: Mrs.Doubtfire

Attendees: Fred, Barney, Wilma, Betty, Archie, Edith

Time	Item	Who
12:00	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check in• Key outputs identified and agreed• Meeting protocol explained• Time keeper nominated• Scribe nominated	Mrs. Doubtfire
12:15	Values definition	Mrs. Doubtfire
12:20	Creating our Values <i>Exercise 1 – Ideation</i> Step 1 – Creation (15 min) Step 2 – Sharing (45 min)	Mrs. Doubtfire & All
1:20	Creating our Values <i>Exercise 2 - Clustering</i>	Mrs. Doubtfire & All
1.35	Creating our Values <i>Exercise 3 – Distillation and finalising</i>	Mrs. Doubtfire & All
2:45	Close <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review outputs – did we get to where we want to be. If not, plan to reconvene.- Review meeting. What worked well, what do we need to improve on.	Mrs.Doubtfire
3:00	Meeting finishes	

Some key points:

- Emphasise meeting starts on time
- No cellphones unless absolutely necessary
- Check in - this is a time where each person can show they are dialled into this meeting. A good idea is to ask them to say how they are feeling at the time.
- Rules
 - One person talking at a time
 - Stay on topic
 - Off topic subjects will be parked and addressed at end of the meeting if time
 - No disruptions like ordering coffee
- Meeting review is important to identify what went well and what could be improved on next time.