

# Conducting Effective Meetings



## Facilitation Tips for Maximum Engagement

- Consider the different ways that people process information as you make design decisions for your meeting.
- Manage the group by building a collaborative environment and sharing ownership of parts of the agenda.
- Facilitate the discussion actively and stay neutral in order to encourage others to share.
- Help the group stay on track by checking on the progress, the goals and the objectives.
- Manage conflict as it arises by focusing the group on issues and solutions, not opinions.
- Actively use icebreakers and a variety of processing tactics to infuse energy into longer meetings.
- As the meeting leader protect minority interests by making room for people to be heard respectfully.

## Best Practices: Planning for Meeting Efficiency

Planning is a necessary, but often overlooked aspect of running meetings. With a 20-minute investment, most meetings can be significantly improved in efficiency and effectiveness. Spend 10 minutes answering these questions when you decide on the meeting and before inviting anyone:

- What's the purpose of the meeting?
- What are the objectives to achieve by the time the meeting is complete? Be realistic.
- Is a meeting the most efficient tool for these objectives?
- Who is needed to accomplish these objectives? (less is better)
- What is your estimated timing for each agenda item?
- What resources or background information should be sent in advance?

Use your other 10 minutes, planning the flow and engagement techniques within 24 hours of the meeting by answering these questions:

- How will you orient you meeting attendees for a powerful start? (see below for ideas)
- How will you get everyone involved in the meeting?
- How will you keep any one person from dominating or derailing the meeting?
- How will you facilitate problem-solving, brainstorming and decision-making when necessary?
- How will you capture commitments and decisions for follow-up?

## Best Practices: During your Meeting

- Start and end on time.
- Orient you audience at the start to help bring everyone's focus to the meeting with the following:
  - purpose of meeting and objectives to be met,
  - procedures to be used during the meeting,
  - clear information base (history and past work) upon which the group will build, and
  - any expectations (ie. criteria for decisions) or boundaries (areas not up for discussion) necessary for success
- Assign roles for maximum effectiveness - timekeeper, facilitator, WWW list keeper, process checker
- Meeting summaries and action plan - consider the power of having people leave your meeting with a sense of accomplishment. This will happen when you create a clear list of decisions made and committed actions during the meeting and summarize it at the end. Remember to leave a few minutes to read it aloud and validate the commitments on the list.
- Evaluation of your meetings - it sends a great message to your attendees when you take a minute to ask "What worked?" and "What didn't work?" about your meeting. This can be done verbally or with a simple survey depending on the nature of your meeting.