

Running an effective meeting

Before the Meeting

Before preparing an agenda for a meeting, make sure that it is absolutely necessary to meet with the group. Ask yourself:

- Is there a set of action items that needs to be talked about before the group can make progress?
- Does important information need to be shared?
- Do issues need to be discussed?

If the answer is yes to any of those questions, then you should probably meet with the group. Now that you know you are going to have a meeting, it is important to organize an agenda while keeping the goal of the meeting in mind.

Setting the Agenda

Set the agenda based on what the goals of the meeting are. Create an extensive list of items that need to be done and include only those that help achieve the goal. Then organize the list of items that will work best for the time you have. You should decide if you want to tackle the most important things first or save them to the end.

Use a style that works best for the group you are meeting with. Set the amount of time for each agenda item with the group. Distribute the agenda well in advance so that meeting participants are aware of what will take place.

During the meeting

Understanding your role is key to having a successful meeting. The following list provides descriptions of some of the roles that you might take on during a meeting:

- **Facilitator** – responsible for keeping the group focused on the agenda during the meeting. Steer conversation and move onto the next agenda item, or stay on the current one if necessary, when the time is right. Encourage quiet participants to provide their input.
- **Time Keeper** – responsible for keeping track of the amount of time and informing the facilitator when it might be necessary to move onto the next agenda item.
- **Note taker** – responsible for keeping a record of the group conversation. Take notes on important decisions made, potential ideas, or action items that need further attention. Distribute notes at the end of the meeting so everyone has access to them.
- **Participant** – responsible for participating as actively as possible. Listen carefully, speak clearly and forcefully when you make a point. Add any relevant information to the conversation when applicable.

After the meeting

Follow up with action items that were decided in the meeting. Make sure that the important work that was done during your meeting does not go to waste.