



# How to run an organised meeting

## Basic Tips on how to run more effective meetings

If you want to have more effective meetings, first you have to learn the basics. Here are some simple and easy-to-follow guidelines that should be followed every time your group meets for before, during and after the meeting.

1. Only hold a meeting if necessary
2. All meetings must have clear objectives
3. Invite a neutral facilitator to sensitive meetings
4. All meetings must have an agenda which includes topics for discussion and a time allotment for each topic
5. Meeting information needs to be circulated to everyone prior to the meeting. Include:
  - meeting agenda
  - location/time/date
  - background information
  - assigned items for preparation
6. Meetings must start precisely on time so as not to punish those who are punctual
7. Meeting notes must be minuted and stored in a safe place.
8. The decisions made by the group must be documented.
9. Assigned action items must be documented, and the appropriate participant must be appointed to follow up on the completion of all action items.

## Things to consider when preparing for your meetings

Following is a suggested list of considerations when preparing for your meetings:

- Be sure you're clear on the goal and be sure all participants are clear on this.
- Establish a specific standard by which you will measure success or failure
- Reduce the number of people to only those necessary to accomplish the goal.
- Establish a clear and appropriately detailed agenda, and circulate it and other written materials in advance.
- Be aware of the particular customs, rules and etiquette for the meeting.

## Importance of an agenda

Creating an effective agenda is one of the most important elements for a productive meeting. The agenda communicates important information such as:

- Topics for discussion
- Presenter or discussion leader for each topic
- Time allotment for each topic

It also provides an outline for the meeting ( how long to spend on which topics) and can be used as a checklist to ensure that all information is covered. The agenda also lets participants know what will be discussed if it's distributed before the meeting. This gives them an opportunity to come to the meeting prepared for the upcoming discussions or decisions.

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## Tips for Creating an effective agenda

- Send an email stating about the meeting, the goal of the meeting as well as details such as when and where it will be. Ask those invited to accept or decline.
- Ask participants requesting an agenda items to contact you at least two days before the meeting with their request and the amount of time they will need to present it.
- It's your responsibility to ensure that each agenda item is directly related to the goals of the particular meeting. You must be realistic in the amount of time you allocate to each presenter. Don't cram an unrealistic number of agenda items into an hour's meeting. When people accept an hour's meeting, they expect to be finished in an hour.
- Send the agenda to all the meeting participants the day before the meeting with a reminder of the meeting goals, location, time and duration.
- The most important part of creating an effective agenda is to follow it during the meeting!

## Is it actually worth meeting?

The biggest waste of time is meeting when it's not necessary. Here are some tips for deciding if a meeting is worth your time:

### **1. Has a goal been set for the meeting?**

Is there a purpose for the meeting? Every meeting should have an objective and if the one you're supposed to go to doesn't, consider recommending that an email be sent instead.

### **2. Has an agenda been created ahead of time?**

An agenda is the basis for an effective meeting. Creating and distributing the meeting agenda one or two days before the meeting begins gives participants an opportunity to prepare for the meeting.

### **3. Will the appropriate people be attending?**

If the appropriate people aren't present, then important decisions get put on hold. It will also take time to update key individuals on what took place in the meeting they missed. It's better to put the meeting on hold until all of the right people can attend.

### **4. Could the information be covered in an e-mail?**

The purpose of most meeting is sharing information and updating others. If possible, make an effort to substitute these types of meetings with an e-mail. Simply send one e-mail to all the people who would have attended the meeting. This will save everyone time, they'll still be up-to-date on what's happening and they'll be grateful for having one less meeting to attend that week.

***If you require further information or support on this topic please contact  
Evesham Volunteer Centre***

## **Disclaimer**

The information provided in this sheet is for guidance only. It is not a substitute for professional advice and we cannot accept any responsibility for loss occasioned as a result of any person acting or refraining from acting upon it

**Acknowledgement: The Bedford Centre for Voluntary Services**



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