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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

UNITAR Hiroshima Fellowship for Afghanistan 2011 Cycle - Workshop I

Management of Effective Meetings

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Ref. BOOK: "Games Trainers Play" by Edward Scannell, Interaction Associates,
Boston, USA, & Michael Fors Presentation-High Performance Meetings

Contents

The Basics of Running Successful Meetings

- Types & purpose of meetings
- Good/Bad meetings
- Elements of effective meetings
- Meeting Process
- Members role
- Summary
- Exercise



Types of Meetings

- **Formal:**
With agenda, rules, procedure, minutes, records
- **Informal:**
Casual and relaxed
- structure but nothing written



Purpose of Meetings

- Process meetings (P) regular, all attend
- Mission meetings (M) as needed, certain people attend
 - To solve a problem (M)
 - Make a plan/decision (M)
 - Share information (P)
(seek/provide info, reporting, presentation, etc.)
 - Check organization progress (P)
 - Align work across teams (P)
 - Combinations (lead to confusion)



Good Meetings and Bad Meetings

Do you:

Feel like you attend too many meetings?

Get frustrated due to time wasted in ineffective meetings?

Think of a meeting you attend regularly that frustrates you

Bad meetings:

- Without a clearly defined agenda
- That seems to drone forever
- That rambles from topic-to-topic
- That ends without any apparent result?
- Frustrating

Good Meetings and Bad Meetings

Bad/ineffective meetings:

You never:

- seem to get to the point
- you leave wondering why you were even present
- a waste of one of the most valuable resources of any organization – time

Effective meetings:

- Leave you energized and feeling that you've really accomplished something
- To improve bad meetings: create a plan to fix it by the end of this session, using content in these slides
- **So what makes a meeting effective?**

Elements of Effective Meetings

- * Effective meetings don't just happen:
 - Require deliberate planning
 - Must be conducted in an effective and efficient manner
 - Responsibility of leader/facilitator

- * Structure the meeting planning, preparation, execution & follow up around 3 basic criteria:
 1. Effective meetings achieve the meeting's objective
 2. Take up a minimum amount of time
 3. Leave participant feeling that a sensible process has been followed

Elements of Effective Meetings

- Agenda
 - Every meeting should have an agenda
 - What process? brainstorming, presentation, small group work, etc.
- Information that answers:
 - What is the purpose of the meeting?
 - Who will lead the meeting?
 - What is expected of the participants?
 - How much time will be spent on each agenda item?
 - What decision making method are to be used?
- A well-organized agenda will:
 - be your road map for keeping everyone on track
 - serve to set expectations for the meeting
 - Help attendees prepare
- **So tightly organized agendas are more likely to lead to productive meetings**

The Agenda

The agenda should also clearly state:

- The goal/purpose of the meeting
 - The goal should relate to the reason for the meeting
 - An example of a meeting goal could be “Decision about project priorities.”
- Expected output
 - The output should be a concrete deliverable

– An example of an expected output could be a “list of agreed upon project priorities”

Preparing the agenda consider:

- Prioritize
- Results
- Participants
- Sequence
- Timing
- Date & time
- Place

Distribute the agenda to all meeting invitees for review/feedback

Simple Agenda Template

AGENDA Meeting Name: Attendees: Overall Outcome:				
	Date:		Building & Room:	
	Time:		Dial in Number:	
Timeframe	Topic	Who	Process	Expected Outcome
Decision method:				

Meeting Time

- **Time is important, so...**
- Be sure that you've set both a meeting start and end time so the attendees can plan accordingly
- Be cognizant of time in order to keep the discussion focused
- Consider allotting a specific period of time to each agenda item
- Adjust time allotted for each agenda item during the meeting
- Time is a critical resource
- For-profit environment, example: a one-hour meeting with 2 managers and 4 engineers:
 - Manager: \$100/hour –\$200
 - Engineers: \$ 60/hour – \$240
 - Total – \$440.00
- **So stick to a “start on time-- stop on time” policy**

Identifying “Next Steps”

- The meeting leader should make sure leaving enough time to:
 - Ensure that all agenda items have been addressed and expectations met
 - Re-cap the key points raised during the meeting and identify the tasks/next steps
 - Make certain that people know who has been assigned the job of accomplishing the tasks/next steps
- **Meeting summary**
 - A summary that is a synthesis of the key points raised during the meeting should be prepared and distributed to all participants within 24 hours after the meeting has ended

Respect differences of opinion

- Participants should listen thoughtfully to what others are saying
- Search for common ground as well as listen for differences
- Participants should keep remarks brief whenever possible to ensure that there is enough time left for others to give input
- **Praise! Praise! Praise!**
 - Praise people twice as much as you criticize
 - Never let any good deed or action go unrecognized
 - Say thank you publicly at every meeting
 - Recognize the value of peoples' contributions at the beginning or within the meeting

Meeting Processes

- Running a meeting is not a dictatorial role
- You have to be participative right from the start to ensure
 - maximum satisfaction achieved
 - parliamentary procedures followed
- Once you have an agenda prepared and shared with participants for feedback, certain actions need to be followed:
- Before the Meeting
- During the Meeting and
- After the Meeting

Before the Meeting

- Define the purpose of the meeting
- Identify the participants
 - Every invitee should have a role
 - Identify a recorder or secretary
 - Invite the right people and the right number (M)
- Prepare an agenda in advance of the meeting
 - Communicate the intent of each agenda item using labels such as (A) Action, (I) Information, (V) Vote
 - Identify estimate of time allocated to the agenda item

Before the Meeting... (continued)

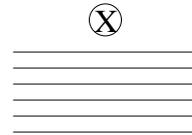
- Prepare or identify background information
- Assign responsibilities for agenda items and communicate to those responsible
- Publish the agenda and identify background information to be reviewed
- Plan for breaks – lunch, coffee, transport, audio/video etc.
- Consider logistics
 - Room – layout, seating, distractions, etc.
 - Support items – projector, white board, pens, etc.

Meeting Room

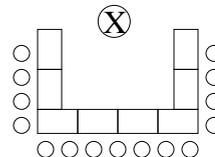
- Space matters!
 - Members must be able to easily see one another
 - Room should have comfortable temperature
 - Adequate space for planners, notebooks, or laptops
 - People should be able to hear the discussion easily
 - If it is a large group, the meeting's facilitator should consider standing

Meeting Room Arrangement

- Theater Style
 - Leader has great power by position
 - Participation and interruption by audience is limited

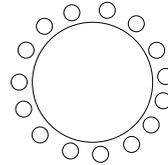


- U-Shaped Style
 - Equality of membership
 - No doubt of who the leader is
 - Good visibility for visual aids



Meeting Room Arrangement...(Continued)

- Circle Style
 - Democratic: equality is stressed
 - Great visibility by participants
 - Obvious body language
 - Excellent participation



During the Meeting

- Arrive early
 - Arrange the room if necessary
 - Know how to control the lighting and temperature in the room
 - Distribute handouts
- Begin on time
- Introduce members if not familiar; introduce visitors
- Establish ground rules, if necessary
- Run the meeting

During the Meeting... (Continued)

- Control interruptions – ask that cell phones and pagers be turned-off
- Identify and record results
- Assign responsibilities for follow-up – Action Registry
- End on time
- Next Meeting Date/Time
- Thank participants for their input and reinforce the importance of outcomes on the organization

After the meeting

- Publish the minutes promptly
- Identify responsibilities for action items
- Assess the meeting:
 - What do we do well?
 - What can be improved?



Diagnostic Checklist

High Performance Meetings Evaluation		Scoring (answer all questions with "x" in box)				
Meeting Title:		1	2	3	4	5
Meeting Date:						
Facilitator(s):		No	Somewhat	Average	well	Exceptional
Meeting Planning						
1	Was the purpose of the meeting clear?					
2	Was your role in the meeting clear?					
3	Were the meeting arrangements communicated adequately?					
Meeting Agenda						
4	Was an agenda provided?					
5	Was the agenda distributed at least 24 hours in advance?					
6	Were the agenda items adequately separated?					
7	Was time scheduled for the agenda items?					
8	Was the decision method for each agenda item clarified before the meeting?					
9	Was the expected outcome identified for each agenda item?					
10	Was the owner of each agenda item identified?					
Meeting Facilitation						
11	Were minutes published?					
12	Did the minutes contain adequate information?					
13	Did the meeting arrangements allow you to participate fully?					
14	Did the meeting facilitator include all participants?					
15	Did the meeting follow the agenda?					
16	Was the meeting purpose achieved?					
Score Total:		1	2	3	4	5
Average score:						15
						0.9

Members Role

Chair/Facilitator: (does not need to be content expert or manager)

Prepare for the meeting:

- Conduct and control the meeting
 - watch timing or assign someone to this responsibility
 - ensure all have an equal opportunity to speak
 - keep meeting on track per the agenda
 - drive process to achieve outcomes
 - close each agenda item
 - ensure action is clear
 - by whom and by when
 - Depending on the number of participants and/or the complexity of the issues on the agenda, you may want to get the additional help of a gatekeeper, timekeeper, and recorder

Members Role... (Continued)

Secretary/recorder:

- Keeps meeting minutes
- Displays minutes visually during the meeting (this is recommended approach)
- Publishes them (1 pg./24hrs./key outcomes)

Also the recorder/secretary:

- Ensures agenda and relevant papers are distributed in time with date, time and place of meeting
- Prepare and book the meeting space
- Have background papers and information for the chair
- Carry copy of previous minutes for approval
- Record names of attendees

Members Role... (Continued)

- Timekeeper:
 - Ensures timeframes are met per topic
 - Negotiates and prioritizes with the group if more time is needed on certain topics
- Gatekeeper:
 - Helps leverage the intelligence in the room
 - Encourages quiet people to speak up – 1 sentence can have major impact!
 - Diplomatically quiets vocal people

Summary

- **Plan! Plan! Plan!**
 - Meeting design (Agenda) is the Number 1 mechanism for effective meetings
 - For each agenda item, make sure the group is clear about the goals, processes, and functions
- The techniques described in this presentation can be applied to any type of meeting you encounter
- Consider compiling your own list of successful techniques based on specific meetings and environment
- **Effective meetings are the result of deliberate planning**

Exercise

Agenda Example – Good or Bad?

Thursday, August 24 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. PST Site Conference Rm 10/1009 Meeting Purpose: Product Timeline		
Agenda		
1:00 – 2:00	Review data Q&A	Michael Kidd
2:00 – 3:00	Update on options	Michael Kidd
3:00 - 4:00	Make Decision	All

Could confusion arise prior to the meeting as the agenda is published?

Could confusion arise in the meeting? How?