

The 10 Best Tips for Effective Meetings

Tip #1: Do I have a clear meeting objective?

1. Do the bylaws _____ **require** _____ a meeting?
2. Is there enough on the _____ **agenda** _____ to _____ **warrant** _____ an in-person meeting?
3. Is the content purely _____ **informational** _____ with no _____ **feedback** _____ needed immediately?

“The majority of meetings should be discussions that lead to decisions.” Patrick Lencioni

Can a topic/meeting presented be solely informational?

The _____ **best** _____ meetings are those where the _____ **best** _____ decisions have been made.

Even if the meeting is for the sole purpose of _____ **data** _____ delivery. This may provide an _____ **avenue** _____ for future work. In turn, the best decisions may occur as a result of the _____ **delivery of data provided** _____.

Do you have the necessary flexibility to hold meetings only when necessary?

Tip #2: Am I prepared for the meeting?

1. Develop an _____ **agenda** _____ and distribute it _____ **prior** _____ to the meeting.
2. Confirm attendees. Have a clear _____ **attendance** _____ policy.
3. Develop a program to _____ **onboard** _____ new and returning members. Members will _____ **participate** _____ more readily when they understand the procedures and process of the meeting.
4. _____ **Loosely** _____ run meetings, lacking _____ **purpose** _____ or structure will frustrate member participation and willingness to attend in the future.
5. Determine who will _____ **take minutes** _____ if you do not have a secretary. This should not be left up to the _____ **chair** _____.

“You have a meeting to make a decision, not to decide on the question.” Bill Gates

Tip #3: How will I chair this meeting?

According to the data collected by Apple, we interact with our smartphone about 80 times a day.

1. Consider the many things that _____ **disrupt** _____ a meeting.
2. Stay _____ **on track** _____ while moving through an agenda.

3. Refocus side conversations. Remind members of the topic before the group.
 4. Consider a timed agenda.
 5. Elicit participation from everyone by learning and using good facilitation skills.
- Ask participants to prepare both a pro and con response prior to the meeting to elicit discussion on both sides of an issue. Establish a culture where everyone is called upon. If a few dominate the discussion, comment that you've heard their viewpoints.
- "Now you are curious on the thoughts of the rest of the group."
6. Use open ended questions and rephrase to draw out issues to promote full and rich dialogue.
 7. Wrap up or summarize decisions. This can be accomplished by restating the adopted motion and declaring the next step.
 8. Be sincere and thank everyone for their time.
 9. End on time.

"A manager's ability to turn meetings into a thinking environment is probably an organization's greatest asset." Nancy Kline

Tip #4: How do I become a better board/committee member?

1. Do your homework before the meeting.
2. Be an engaged listener.
3. Respect everyone's time.
4. Have an open mind.
5. Lead change and don't resist it.
6. Mentor new and prospective members.
7. Respect decisions and be a full participant.
8. Challenge yourself and grow as a leader.

"Approach every meeting with a purposeful, high-energy, ready-to-make-a-contribution attitude, and watch how fast leadership's perception of you follows your behavior." Jack Welch

Tip #5: How do I set and work within the agenda?

"The agenda determines what the business is to be considered at the meeting. It is the "road map" the members agree to follow from the beginning of the meeting to the end." From Cannon's Concise Guide to Rules of Order, Hugh Cannon, page 79

1. Methods to expedite the business include having reports delivered electronically and only call for comments and questions.
2. Grant the chair the ability to reorder the agenda.
3. Have a time frame on when new business may be proposed.
3. Utilize a portion of the meeting for board building, governance, and/or education.
4. Establish a "parking lot" in the agenda. With group consent, this allows for topics to be discussed, and properly assigned for future discussion or action.

Tip#6: How do I utilize the best principles of parliamentary procedure for our group?

Best principles of parliamentary procedure focus on courtesy, communication, and common sense

1. The size of the group often dictates the formality of the meeting.
2. Address one topic or main motion at a time.
3. Maintain order by requiring those wishing to speak to wait to be recognized by the chair.
4. Discourage banter back and forth between members.

Tip#7: Virtual meeting formats differ. How do I account for those differences?

"By failing to prepare you are preparing to fail." Benjamin Franklin

1. Good preparation is just as essential. Be prepared by opening up the meeting early.
2. Check that slide or videos will play prior to the meeting start.
3. Have good lighting and audio.
4. Main challenge is engagement.
5. Develop protocol for members to engage in debate and ask questions.
6. Camerers on or off? Establish the expectations.
7. As participants, be aware of distractions.
8. Be aware of side chats and text messages. Be appropriate.

Tip#8: How will I establish a meeting recap?

Never let the quote of Captain James Kirk of the USS Enterprise be said of your meeting. "A meeting is an event where minutes are taken and hours wasted."

1. If minutes are to be completed and adopted electronically, then this should be accomplished with a few days to one week following the meeting.

2. When minutes are not dispersed until right before the next meeting, then include a meeting summary with action items and updates to the “to do list.”

Tip #9: How do I handle the business when consensus is not reached?

“Be nice!”

1. Refer to a smaller group or individual to investigate and report back.
2. Postpone to later in the meeting.
3. Postpone to another meeting.
4. Defeat the proposal. It may be brought back at a future meeting.

Tip #10: How do I overcome meeting pitfalls?

“Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors.” African proverb

1. Motion for a recess.
2. Motion to postpone definitely.
3. Anticipate debate and assign members to bring out both sides in discussion.
4. Make good meeting management a habit that everyone will appreciate with good results and ending on time.
5. Always end the meeting on a positive note. Ex: Rose/Rose Bud, More of Less of, What did you like? What did you learn? What will you do differently?
6. Distribute follow-up surveys and be willing to accept criticism and deliver praise.

“When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.” Henry Ford

Resources

1. Website: www.agreatmeeting.com
2. Magic Gavel app from AGreatMeeting.com
3. “Cannon’s Concise Guide to Rules of Order” by Hugh Cannon
4. “American Institute of Parliamentarians Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure”
5. AIP website: www.aipparl.org
6. debraadds@gmail.com and xtrctr@sbcglobal.net