

# Guide to Holding Productive Meetings



## Why hold regular meetings?

Effective business meetings build and maintain good communication. Ineffective meetings are a waste of time.

- ☒ Face to face interactions are still the best method of communication – With all the wonderful technology for communicating, a face to face meeting still is the fastest and most effective mode of communication.
- ☒ Regular meetings can aid in reducing personality clashes and problem avoidance risks - If professional relationships within a business have become emotional or disrespectful, the formal meeting process creates a more respectful and facilitated space to discuss and resolve important issues. When these tough issues are addressed head on, the reoccurring problems and frustrations are eliminated.
- ☒ Business meetings create a formal accountability to action - When a clear action is assigned to specific people by specific dates and is formally documented, the probability the task is completed improves.
- ☒ Businesses that hold regular meetings tend to be more profitable and their employees have a higher level of overall satisfaction. Improved communication leads to efficiency, better clarity and a more respectful work environment.

## Who Should Attend?

If logistics don't allow for a full team meeting, create a smaller group with representation from each area of the business.

Often there is an informal 'grapevine' of communication in your business. If you recognize this informal communication, invite the group representatives to the meetings and they will spread the word about the meeting through their grapevine.

## Tips for Productive Team Meetings

- ☒ Have a meeting every week. Dedicate a specific time and day of the week for the meeting. Remember to be respectful of employee's most productive times when scheduling meeting times.
- ☒ Set not only a meeting start time but also a meeting end time so team members can better plan their day. Try to keep the meetings as short as possible. It may take a few meetings to create an effective routine, but once the routine is established, the meetings will become more efficient.
- ☒ Publish the agenda ahead of the meeting. If you are looking to gather input and ideas, make it known ahead of the meeting. Participation will be better if the team has time to consider the topic in advance.

## The Meeting

- ❏ Start the meetings on time. If you delay the meeting due to late arrivals, you are actually rewarding those who come late. Consider banning late comers as they can be a distraction and interrupt the flow of the meeting.
- ❏ If some employees cannot attend, have the meeting anyway.
- ❏ Assign a team member the responsibility of taking and distributing the meeting notes. Any non-attendees will find out what they missed in the meeting. The notes help clarify actions and create accountability.
- ❏ Review the completed action items of the previous meeting and remember to give kudos when due.
- ❏ Don't move on to the next meeting topic without finishing up the first. Be sure everyone has had chance to contribute.
- ❏ Keep the meeting on track. If you feel the meeting is being derailed, try to quickly ascertain if their input is related to the topic at hand, if not; suggest that matter be discussed at next week's meeting.
- ❏ Document actions for attendees to complete and include a due-by date and assign a team member to oversee that all action items are completed.
- ❏ Confirm team members are clear with their assigned tasks. Knowledgeable and confident team members are happy and productive team members.
- ❏ Ask the team to submit discussion points for next week's meeting.
- ❏ Be available for a few minutes after the meeting in case action items need clarification or there are issues that need to be discussed privately.

## Additional Meeting Tips

Often it's necessary to get together with team members outside weekly meeting. Here are some considerations -

- ❑ Do you really need this meeting? Are there items that need to be discussed or can it be covered in a memo or email.
- ❑ Who needs to attend? While it often makes most sense to include only relevant team members, also consider employees have a higher level of workplace satisfaction when they feel well-informed.
- ❑ Really need to focus? Hold a paper-only meeting. Ban cell phones, laptops and tablets as they are a major distraction during meetings. It's easy to hid behind a laptop, not so much behind a pencil.
- ❑ Short on time? Consider holding a 'stand-up meeting'.
- ❑ Consider holding a laser focused one topic meeting. One topic meetings are perfect for new product of service releases and brainstorming sessions.

Businesses that hold regular and effective meetings enjoy the benefits of better communication across the entire team. Better communication means happier team members and a more profitable business.

