

“Secrets” of Effective Meetings



April 19, 2011

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Guide to Conducting Effective Meetings

Executive Summary – (Preview)

Meetings can be very expensive activities when one considers the cost of labor for the meeting and how much can or cannot get done in them. So take meeting management very seriously.

The process used in a meeting depends on the kind of meeting you plan to have, e.g., staff meeting, planning meeting, problem solving meeting, etc. However, there are certain basics that are common to various types of meetings. These basics are described below.

There may seem to be a lot of suggestions listed below for something as apparently simple as a meeting. However, any important activity likely would include a long list of suggestions. The list seems to become much smaller once you master how to conduct the activity.)

Selecting Participants

- The decision about who is to attend depends on what you want to accomplish in the meeting. This may seem too obvious to state, but it's surprising how many meetings occur without the right people there.
- Don't depend solely on your own judgment about who should come to the meeting. Ask others for their opinions as well.
- If possible, email or call likely attendees to tell them about the meeting, its overall purpose and why their attendance is important.
- Follow-up your email or call with a notice, including the meeting purpose, where it will be held and when, the list of participants and whom to contact if they have questions.
- Send out a copy of the proposed meeting agenda along with the meeting notice.
- Have someone designated to record important actions, assignments and due dates during the meeting. This person should ensure that this information is distributed to all participants shortly after the meeting.

Developing Agendas

- Develop the agenda together with key participants in the meeting. Think of what overall outcome you want from the meeting and what activities need to occur to reach that outcome. The agenda should be organized so that these activities are conducted during the meeting.
- Title the agenda or state the overall outcome that you want from the meeting.
- Design the agenda so that participants get involved early by having something for them to do right away and so they come on time.
- Next to each major topic, include the type of action needed, the type of output expected (decision, vote, action assigned to someone), and time estimates for addressing each topic.
- Ask participants for feedback on the proposed agenda and solicit commitment.
- Keep the meeting agenda clearly visible at all times during the meeting.
- Don't overly design meetings; be willing to adapt the meeting agenda if members are making progress in the planning process.
- Think about how you label an event, so people come in with that mindset; it may pay to have a short dialogue around the label to develop a common mindset among attendees, particularly if they include representatives from various cultures.

Opening Meetings

- Always start on time; this respects those who showed up on time and reminds late-comers that the posted times in the schedule are meaningful.
- Welcome attendees and thank them for their time.
- Review the agenda at the beginning of each meeting, giving participants a chance to understand all proposed major topics, suggest changes and commit to following the agenda.
- Note that the meeting recorder (scribe or secretary) will take minutes and provide them back to each participant shortly after the meeting.
- Model the kind of energy and participant needed by meeting participants.
- Clarify your role(s) in the meeting.

Establishing Ground Rules for Meetings

You don't need to develop new ground rules each time you have a formal meeting. However, it pays to have a few basic ground rules that can be used for most of your meetings. These ground rules cultivate the basic ingredients needed for successful meetings.

- Four powerful ground rules are: *participate, remain focused, maintain momentum, and reach closure.* (You may want to include a ground rule about confidentiality.)
- List special ground rules on the agenda and keep basic ground rules posted at all times.
- If you have new attendees who are not used to your meetings, you might wish to review each ground rule before the agenda is accepted (endorsed) by the attendees.

Time Management

- One of the most difficult facilitation tasks is time management – time seems to run out before tasks are completed. The facilitator's primary role is to keep the process moving along.
- You might ask one of the attendees to keep track of the time.
- If the planned time on the agenda is not sufficient to deal with that item on the agenda, present that fact to the group and ask for their input as to a resolution.

Evaluations of Meeting Process

- It's amazing how often people will complain about a meeting being a complete waste of time -- but they only say so after the meeting. Ask for feedback during the meeting so you can improve the meeting process right away. Evaluating a meeting only at the end of the meeting means we often miss an opportunity to do something immediately with participants' feedback.
- Every couple of hours, conduct 5-10 minutes "effectiveness/satisfaction" checks.
- In a round-table approach, quickly have participants say how they think the meeting is going.

Evaluating the Overall Meeting

- Leave 5-10 minutes at the end of each meeting to evaluate that meeting; and be self-disciplined enough to avoid the temptation to skip this "process improvement" portion of the meeting.
- Have each member rank the meeting from 1-5, with 5 as the highest, and have each member explain their ranking with at least two or three words.
- Have the most senior executive be the last to rank the effectiveness/quality of the meeting.

Closing Meetings

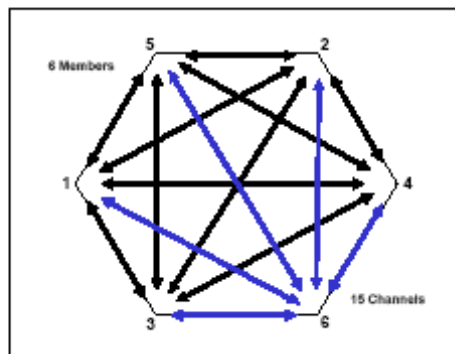
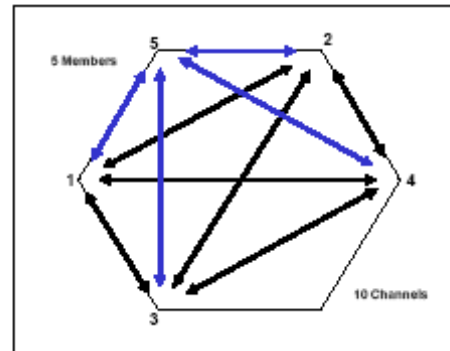
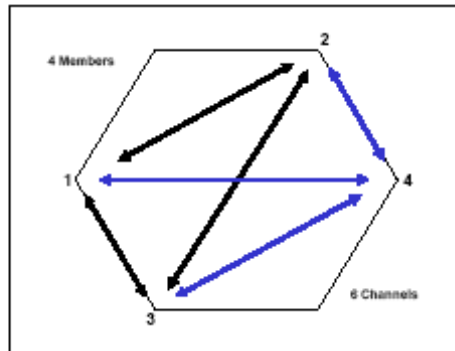
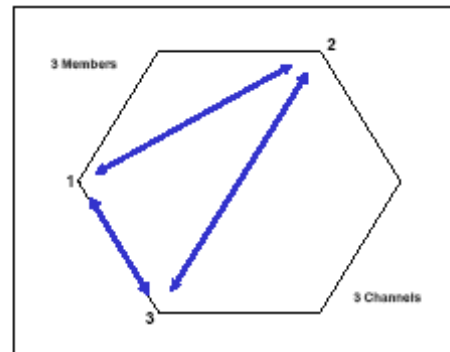
- Near the end of a meeting, review all actions and assignments, set the time for the next meeting and ask each invited person if they can make it or not (to get their commitment)
- Clarify that meeting minutes and/or actions will be reported back to the meeting participants in at most one week to help keep momentum going.
- Always end meetings on time and make a sincere effort to end on a positive note.

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Communications:

Calculating Relationship Pairs



How Many Relationships?

$$N * (N - 1)$$

2

23 team members = 190 Channels

WHOSE JOB IS IT ???

This is a story about four people named *Everybody*, *Somebody*, *Anybody* and *Nobody*. There was an important job to be done, and *Everybody* was sure *Somebody* would do it. *Anybody* could have done it, but *Nobody* did it. *Somebody* got aggravated because it was *Everybody's* job. *Everybody* knew *Anybody* could do it, but *Nobody* realized *Everybody* wouldn't do it. Before it was over, *Everybody* blamed *Somebody* because *Nobody* did what *Anybody* could have done.

Essential Roles

Leader



Timer



Scribe



We do our best to be:

- **Authentic**
- **Punctual**
- **Respectful**

Overview of Parliamentary Procedure

History

Parliamentary procedure originated with the Parliament of England and is the basis of constitutional forms of government. In professional society business meetings we use a descendant of the English parliamentary procedure. Its purpose remains the same—to facilitate the democratic transaction of decision making in an organized group.

American parliamentary rules were written and made uniform in 1801 by Thomas Jefferson (also author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence). Jefferson's manual was still too complex for average citizens, so in 1876 General Henry Robert, an engineer, authored the first *Robert's Rules of Order*. Robert became interested in parliamentary procedure when he was asked to preside at a meeting and didn't know how. "My embarrassment was supreme. I plunged in, trusting to Providence that the Assembly would behave itself."

Basis of Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is an established system of rules that govern procedures in democratic meetings.

Its rules protect:

• The right of the majority to decide	• The rights of individual members
• The right of the minority to be heard	• The rights of absentees

Parliamentary procedure protects the rights of people to join together to accomplish common goals and enables them to debate and take action in a fair manner with the least amount of controversy.

Key Rules of Parliamentary Procedure

1. **The rights of the organization supercede the rights of individual members.** The organization has the right to make its own rules that must then be observed by all members. Should a conflict arise between the rights of a member and the right of the organization to do its business, the rights of the organization prevail.
2. **A quorum must be present to do business.** A quorum is the number of members who must be legally present to transact business. The number is usually stated in the bylaws.
3. **The majority rules.** The minority has the right to be heard, but once a decision has been reached by a majority of the members present and voting, the minority must then respect and abide by the decision.
4. **Silence is consent.** Those members who do not vote agree, by their silence, to go along with the decision of the majority of those who vote.
5. **Two-thirds vote rule.** This means 2/3 of the votes cast must be cast in the affirmative in order to adopt a motion which will limit or take away the rights of members or whenever the body is changing something that has already been decided.
6. **One question at a time and one speaker at a time.** No motion is in order that does not directly relate to the question under consideration. Also, once a member has been recognized, he or she has been granted "the floor" and another member may not interrupt him or her.
7. **Debatable motions must receive full debate.** The presiding officer may not put a debatable motion to vote as long as members wish to debate it. Debate can only be suspended by two-thirds vote of the members. Members may not hold the floor for longer than ten minutes at one time, although further limitations are common to insure business is completed.
8. **Once a question is decided, it is not in order to bring up the same motion or one essentially like it at the same meeting.**
9. **Personal remarks in debate are always out of order.** Debate must be directed to motions and/or principles, not motives or personalities.

Glossary

Abstain: To refrain from voting

Amendment: A motion that changes a motion

Carried: Adopted, as in, "the motion was carried"

Out of Order: Not correct from a parliamentary standpoint

Parliamentarian: Person who decides on questions of correct parliamentary procedure

Putting the Question or Call the Previous Question: Placing the motion before the group for a vote

Second: A second person that agrees to have a motion considered

3W's

Effective Project teams engage in *constructive* dialogue.

- What?

What *deliverable* or outcome do you want?

- Who?

Who will *ensure* that it is delivered on time?

- When?

When will the action or task be *completed*?



Meeting Summary

MEETING AGENDA

Date: _____

Topic: _____

Scribed by: _____

Attended by: _____

AGENDA (DESCRIBE DEMOS, DISCUSSIONS, ACTIVITIES, ETC)	ACTIVITY
---	----------

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

PLANNED ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Task/Milestone	Issue #	Owner	Due Date
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			

ACTION ITEMS

Actions	Owner	Due Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

NOTES/COMMENTS

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

240 Action Words for Scheduling

Accomplish	Close	Draft	Influence	Perform	Revise
Achieve	Collaborate	Edit	Inform	Persuade	Revitalize
Acquire	Combine	Eliminate	Initiate	Pioneer	Save
Activate	Communicate	Employ	Inspect	Plan	Scan
Adapt	Compare	Encourage	Inspire	Prepare	Schedule
Add	Compile	Enforce	Install	Present	Screen
Address	Complete	Engineer	Institute	Preside	Select
Administer	Compose	Enlarge	Instruct	Prevent	Sell
Advertise	Conceive	Enlist	Insure	Process	Separate
Advise	Conclude	Ensure	Integrate	Procure	Serve
Aid	Condense	Establish	Interpret	Produce	Set Up
Amass	Conduct	Estimate	Interview	Program	Settle
Analyze	Construct	Evaluate	Introduce	Promote	Shape
Announce	Consult	Examine	Invent	Propose	Simplify
Anticipate	Consummate	Exchange	Invest	Prove	Simulate
Apply	Contract	Execute	Investigate	Provide	Solve
Appoint	Control	Exhibit	Launch	Publicize	Speak
Apprise	Convert	Expand	Lead	Publish	Specify
Approach	Coordinate	Expedite	Lighten	Purchase	Staff
Approve	Correct	Explain	Liquidate	Qualify	Standardize
Arrange	Counsel	Extract	Localize	Raise	Stimulate
Assemble	Create	Facilitate	Locate	Recommend	Streamline
Assess	Cultivate	Familiarize	Maintain	Reconcile	Summarize
Assign	Decentralize	Find	Manage	Record	Supervise
Assist	Decide	Forecast	Market	Recruit	Support
Attain	Decrease	Form	Mediate	Rectify	Surpass
Audit	Define	Formulate	Minimize	Reduce	Survey
Augment	Delegate	Frame	Moderate	Regulate	Synthesize
Avert	Deliver	Generate	Modernize	Reject	Teach
Avoid	Demonstrate	Govern	Modify	Release	Terminate
Budget	Design	Guide	Monitor	Renegotiate	Test
Build	Detail	Handle	Motivate	Renew	Tighten
Buy	Determine	Head	Negotiate	Reorganize	Trade
Calculate	Develop	Hire	Obtain	Repay	Train
Capture	Devise	Identify	Operate	Report	Translate
Catalogue	Direct	Implement	Orchestrate	Represent	Transmit
Centralize	Discover	Improve	Order	Research	Update
Chair	Distribute	Improvise	Organize	Resign	Utilize
Change	Document	Increase	Originate	Resolve	Verify
Clarify	Double	Index	Oversee	Review	Write



Project Status Report

Area of Responsibility _____
Summarized by: _____
Week Ending: _____

Completed Tasks

Task/Milestone	Owner	Date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		

Decisions Made

Decision	Owner
1.	
2.	
3.	

Issues (summary)

Issues	Owner	Due Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

Next Steps

Task/Milestone	Owner	Due Date
1.		
2.		
3.		

Comments . . .

Concerns that remain undocumented are presumed to be no threat to accomplishment of commitments. The author is implicitly reaffirming previous project commitments that may be impacted by those concerns.

240 Action Words for Reporting

<i>Accomplished</i>	<i>Closed</i>	<i>Drafted</i>	<i>Influenced</i>	<i>Performed</i>	<i>Revised</i>
<i>Achieved</i>	<i>Collaborated</i>	<i>Edited</i>	<i>Informed</i>	<i>Persuaded</i>	<i>Revitalized</i>
<i>Acquired</i>	<i>Combined</i>	<i>Eliminated</i>	<i>Initiated</i>	<i>Pioneered</i>	<i>Saved</i>
<i>Activated</i>	<i>Communicated</i>	<i>Employed</i>	<i>Inspected</i>	<i>Planned</i>	<i>Scanned</i>
<i>Adapted</i>	<i>Compared</i>	<i>Encouraged</i>	<i>Inspired</i>	<i>Prepared</i>	<i>Scheduled</i>
<i>Added</i>	<i>Compiled</i>	<i>Enforced</i>	<i>Installed</i>	<i>Presented</i>	<i>Screened</i>
<i>Addressed</i>	<i>Completed</i>	<i>Engineered</i>	<i>Instituted</i>	<i>Presided</i>	<i>Selected</i>
<i>Administered</i>	<i>Composed</i>	<i>Enlarged</i>	<i>Instructed</i>	<i>Prevented</i>	<i>Separated</i>
<i>Advertised</i>	<i>Conceived</i>	<i>Enlisted</i>	<i>Insured</i>	<i>Processed</i>	<i>Served</i>
<i>Advised</i>	<i>Concluded</i>	<i>Ensured</i>	<i>Integrated</i>	<i>Procured</i>	<i>Set Up</i>
<i>Aided</i>	<i>Condensed</i>	<i>Established</i>	<i>Interpreted</i>	<i>Produced</i>	<i>Settled</i>
<i>Amassed</i>	<i>Conducted</i>	<i>Estimated</i>	<i>Interviewed</i>	<i>Programmed</i>	<i>Shaped</i>
<i>Analyzed</i>	<i>Constructed</i>	<i>Evaluated</i>	<i>Introduced</i>	<i>Promoted</i>	<i>Simplified</i>
<i>Announced</i>	<i>Consulted</i>	<i>Examined</i>	<i>Invented</i>	<i>Proposed</i>	<i>Simulated</i>
<i>Anticipated</i>	<i>Consummated</i>	<i>Exchanged</i>	<i>Invested</i>	<i>Proved</i>	<i>Sold</i>
<i>Applied</i>	<i>Contracted</i>	<i>Executed</i>	<i>Investigated</i>	<i>Provided</i>	<i>Solved</i>
<i>Appointed</i>	<i>Controlled</i>	<i>Exhibited</i>	<i>Launched</i>	<i>Publicized</i>	<i>Specified</i>
<i>Apprised</i>	<i>Converted</i>	<i>Expanded</i>	<i>Led</i>	<i>Published</i>	<i>Spoke</i>
<i>Approached</i>	<i>Coordinated</i>	<i>Expedited</i>	<i>Lightened</i>	<i>Purchased</i>	<i>Staffed</i>
<i>Approved</i>	<i>Corrected</i>	<i>Explained</i>	<i>Liquidated</i>	<i>Qualified</i>	<i>Standardized</i>
<i>Arranged</i>	<i>Counseled</i>	<i>Extracted</i>	<i>Localized</i>	<i>Raised</i>	<i>Stimulated</i>
<i>Assembled</i>	<i>Created</i>	<i>Facilitated</i>	<i>Located</i>	<i>Recommended</i>	<i>Streamlined</i>
<i>Assessed</i>	<i>Cultivated</i>	<i>Familiarized</i>	<i>Maintained</i>	<i>Reconciled</i>	<i>Summarized</i>
<i>Assigned</i>	<i>Decentralized</i>	<i>Forecasted</i>	<i>Managed</i>	<i>Recorded</i>	<i>Supervised</i>
<i>Assisted</i>	<i>Decided</i>	<i>Formed</i>	<i>Marketed</i>	<i>Recruited</i>	<i>Supported</i>
<i>Attained</i>	<i>Decreased</i>	<i>Formulated</i>	<i>Mediated</i>	<i>Rectified</i>	<i>Surpassed</i>
<i>Audited</i>	<i>Defined</i>	<i>Founded</i>	<i>Minimized</i>	<i>Redesigned</i>	<i>Surveyed</i>
<i>Augmented</i>	<i>Delegated</i>	<i>Framed</i>	<i>Moderated</i>	<i>Reduced</i>	<i>Synthesized</i>
<i>Averted</i>	<i>Delivered</i>	<i>Generated</i>	<i>Modernized</i>	<i>Regulated</i>	<i>Taught</i>
<i>Avoided</i>	<i>Demonstrated</i>	<i>Governed</i>	<i>Modified</i>	<i>Rejected</i>	<i>Terminated</i>
<i>Bought</i>	<i>Designed</i>	<i>Guided</i>	<i>Monitored</i>	<i>Released</i>	<i>Tested</i>
<i>Budgeted</i>	<i>Detailed</i>	<i>Handled</i>	<i>Motivated</i>	<i>Renegotiated</i>	<i>Tightened</i>
<i>Built</i>	<i>Determined</i>	<i>Headed</i>	<i>Negotiated</i>	<i>Renewed</i>	<i>Traded</i>
<i>Calculated</i>	<i>Developed</i>	<i>Hired</i>	<i>Obtained</i>	<i>Reorganized</i>	<i>Trained</i>
<i>Captured</i>	<i>Devised</i>	<i>Identified</i>	<i>Operated</i>	<i>Repaid</i>	<i>Translated</i>
<i>Catalogued</i>	<i>Directed</i>	<i>Implemented</i>	<i>Orchestrated</i>	<i>Reported</i>	<i>Transmitted</i>
<i>Centralized</i>	<i>Discovered</i>	<i>Improved</i>	<i>Ordered</i>	<i>Represented</i>	<i>Updated</i>
<i>Chaired</i>	<i>Distributed</i>	<i>Improvised</i>	<i>Organized</i>	<i>Researched</i>	<i>Utilized</i>
<i>Changed</i>	<i>Documented</i>	<i>Increased</i>	<i>Originated</i>	<i>Resolved</i>	<i>Verified</i>
<i>Clarified</i>	<i>Doubled</i>	<i>Indexed</i>	<i>Oversaw</i>	<i>Reviewed</i>	<i>Wrote</i>