Meetings

Preliminaries

To meet or not to meet … that is the question !

If meeting not necessary / not prepared = biggest waste of time

Meeting map

- ✓ **Pre - meeting steps**
- ✓ **The opening**
- ✓ **Clarify objectives**
- ✓ **Clarify the role of meeting leader**
- ✓ **Develop meeting agreements**
- ✓ **Describe the route (meeting overview)**
- ✓ **The body - discussion / problem solving/ decision making**
- ✓ **Commitments to action and recap**

Meetings - steps

- ❑ **Organize a meeting**
- ❑ **Contribute to a meeting**
- ❑ **Attend a meeting**
- ❑ **Record a meeting**

Organizing meetings

➢ Objective (**decide main purpose**)

➢ Atendees (**invite people who contribute to topics, confirm attendance**)

➢ Agenda (**outline specific topics, prioritize each issue & allocate time, send agenda before meeting**)

➢ Location (**convenient for everyone, not in your office, allow time for "over-run" when room booked**)

➢ Requirements (**projectors, flip charts, beverages & biscuits / sandwiches, nametags etc.**)

➢ Time (**preferably before lunch**)

Contributing to meetings

- Chairperson
- Atendees
- Scribe

Chairing a meeting:

❑   Set the platform for a good meeting

(start on time, introduce people if necessary, brief informative opening speech, cultivate ease among people)

❑   Get everyone involved

(ask questions, let everyone air views)

Chairing a meeting - continued

Maintain control

(don't allow sidetracks, watch out for hidden agendas, keep dominant members in check)

Make a decision for each item

(note necessary action & by whom)

End meeting on a high note

(summarize decisions, thank participants for contributions

Follow up

(circulate minutes of meeting within next 2 days)

Managing the discussion - techniques

Asking for opinions

(e.g. What's your reaction / view on that, X ?)

Asking for clarification

(e.g. I don't understand. Can you be a little more specific?
I'm sorry, what do you mean by …. ?)

Using your own words to check

(e.g. Let me see if I understand. Are you saying … ?
Sorry, do you mean that ... ?)

Managing the discussion - techniques

Summarizing

(e.g. So, can I just summarize what we've discussed so far?)

Widening the discussion

(e.g. Is there anything else we should consider?

What other ways are there to approach this?

Checking everyone agrees

(e.g. Does everyone agree that we … ?

Can we go round the table to see if everyone agrees?

All those in favour? And all those against?)

Attending meetings

- Let chairperson know if you plan to attend
- Prepare for meeting (**read agenda, think through, points to raise / clarify**)
- Wait to be seated (**wait till invited**)
- Appear alert and interested (**take notes, don't fidget**)
- Treat everyone with respect (**everyone a say, don't interrupt, don't leave mobile on**)
- Contribute to the meeting (**share with whole group, keep points simple, brief, relevant, avoid being the evaluator on every issue**)

Recording meetings

Be ready to volunteer to be the scribe

(often most junior person)

Record what is being said

(never contribute or pass remarks, note everything down accurately and concisely)

Make your writing easy to read on flip charts

(legible, big enough, don't overuse abbreviations)

Be as accurate as possible

Overcoming problems

✓ **Lack of structure**(explain how meeting will run)

✓ **Bad use of time** (start & end on time, stick to timing)

✓ **People contributing** (prevent one person talking too much, direct questions to people not involved)

✓ **All talk, no action** (clear &final decision on everything on agenda, assign responsibilities, review progress at next meeting)

✓ **Nerves** (appear relaxed and confident, speak slowly