



## **Conduct of Meetings (Aminotes)**

Meetings can be useful, productive tools, but only if conducted properly. Having a meeting that is properly laid out with an agenda and a time frame can help a company or organization accomplish much more in a shorter period of time.

### **Solid Preparation**

The first step to a productive meeting is to be well prepared for it. This means defining the objectives and desired outcomes of the meeting in an agenda. This agenda lets the meeting attendees know exactly what to expect. Include the topics that will be covered during the meeting in as much detail as necessary. Deliver the agenda through mail or email before the meeting so the participants have a chance to look over it and make notes of anything they wish to discuss during the meeting. Bring extra copies of the agenda to the meeting in case any unexpected attendees show up or someone leaves their agenda behind. Make sure to have enough copies of any other handouts that will be distributed during the meeting.

All the equipment needed for the meeting should be readily available. This may include audio/visual equipment such as a laptop, a Wi-Fi network connection, an LCD, and a microphone rental (if necessary). Some meeting organizers like to provide refreshments such as coffee, tea, water, or cookies to the attendees.

### **Effective Moderator**

Each meeting should have a moderator. It is the moderator's job to help the meeting attendees keep on track and the meeting move along if conversation gets stalled on one particular topic. Every meeting should have someone assigned to take notes. This helps the attendees of the meeting review what was covered later and also allows those that could not make it to know what was discussed. This duty can be permanently assigned to someone or regular meeting attendees can swap the note taking duties.

Before discussing the agenda, make any necessary introductions so the attendees are all familiar with each other. When the meeting starts, the moderator should review the agenda and let attendees know exactly what is to be covered and the desired outcome of the meeting. He or she should let all attendees know the timeframe of the meeting. Sticking to this timeframe helps keep the meeting on track.

### **Group Contribution**

While conducting the meeting, the moderator and all other attendees should take the time to hear each person's opinion on a matter. Meetings work best if everyone is



allowed to contribute. If no one offers any ideas, it is the moderator's job to try to employee brainstorming techniques to help come to a decision on a topic. Stay focused on the agenda and don't allow the attendees to stray to other areas. If a good topic arises, but will involve some detailed discussion, ask the note taker to add that topic to the agenda for the next meeting so it can receive its proper discussion time.

### **Gratitude and Appreciation**

As the meeting ends, be sure to thank all attendees for coming. Many meetings are viewed as chores to attend, but if the participants are thanked and feel that their input was appreciated, they will think more highly of them. If this is a regular meeting, the moderator may want to give the next meeting date and make sure that is a good time for everyone. Once the meeting is over, have the note taker or appropriate person type up the minutes of the meeting and distribute to each attendee either through mail or email.

### **The six general types of meetings:**

- Status Update Meetings
- Information Sharing Meetings
- Decision Making Meetings
- Problem Solving Meetings
- Innovation Meetings
- Team Building Meetings

**Status Update Meetings** - It is one of the most common meeting types. This category includes regular team and project meetings, where the primary goal is to align the team via updates on progress, challenges, and next steps. Commonly found group activities in these kinds of meetings are problem solving, decision making, prioritization, and task assignment.

**Information sharing meetings** - Panel debates, keynotes, and lectures are all examples of information sharing meetings. The primary goal of these meeting is for the speakers to share information with the attendees. This could be information about things like upcoming changes, new products and techniques, or in depth knowledge of a



domain. Visual communication tools, like slides and videos, are powerful tools for making the shared information more memorable.

**Decision Making Meetings** - The vast majority of business decisions are made by groups in meetings. While small decisions are made in all kinds of meetings, the more important decisions often get their own dedicated meetings. There are different types of group decision making processes, and care should be taken to choose a process that best matches the situation. A decision making process can include group processes like information gathering and sharing, brainstorming solutions, evaluating options, ranking preferences, and voting.

**Problem Solving Meetings** - Problem solving meetings are perhaps the most complex and varied type of meetings. Whether the meeting is addressing an identified problem, or it is focusing on creating strategies and plans to navigate the future, there are a rich arsenal of group processes that can be used. Scopes and priorities need to be defined, opportunities and threats need to be identified, and possible solutions should be brainstormed, evaluated, and agreed upon.

**Innovation Meetings** - Innovation meetings and creative meetings often start with thinking outside the box, by brainstorming, associating, and sharing ideas in a broad scope. Meeting participants can then use various techniques and processes to reduce the diverse pool of ideas to a more focused short list. Through ranking, evaluations, and decision making the most suitable idea, or ideas, are identified, and recommendations and tasks can be assigned based on this.

**Team Building Meetings** - All meetings should contribute to team building, strengthening relationships and corporate culture. However, now and then team building activities should be the main focus for a meeting. This category include meetings like include all-hands meetings, kick-off meetings, team building outings, and corporate events. Have participants feel like essential parts of their unit, team, department, branch, and company has all kinds of positive impact on their engagement, performance, and satisfaction.

## Purpose of Meetings -

- **To inform:** Meetings are arranged to inform various issues of the organization to its participants. When meetings are arranged for this purpose, information flows in one-way direction from speaker to the audiences.
- **To negotiate:** Meeting is also aimed at making negotiations with inside and outside parties. Here two-way flow of discussion occurs. For example, meeting between owner and trade union leaders may be arranged to make a negotiation.
- **To solve problems:** Meetings are commonly arranged to solve complex and critical problems of organizations. Since meeting is an assembly of people having diverse skills and experience, the participants can thoroughly examine the problem at hand and indicate the possible solutions.
- **To make decisions:** Meeting is also arranged to take decisions regarding various routine and non-routine business affairs through the participation of the concerned members.
- **To resolve conflict:** In organizational life, conflict is a common phenomenon. Conflict may have negative impact on the organization if it is not settled in due time. Meeting among the conflicting parties provides them with an opportunity to come to a common understanding.
- **To interact with external stakeholders:** Meetings are also arranged to exchange information and interact with the external stakeholders like customers, suppliers, distributors, investors, general community etc. This kind of interaction is required for organizational existence.
- **To abide by legal bindings:** Organizations require arranging various meetings to abide by the various legal aspects. For example, every public limited company mandatorily requires arranging Statutory Meeting within 180 days from getting certificate of commencement, annual general meeting in every financial year, Board Meeting after a certain interval etc.

## Role of the Chairperson in a Meeting:

### 1. Take overall charge of the proceedings:

Once the convenor has (generally in consultation with the chair) set out the agenda of the meet, the chairperson has to see that the agenda and the objective are fulfilled in the meet.

### 2. Make sure he is competent:

He should accept to chair the meet only if he feels competent to run it. The chairperson's post is often rotated.

### 3. **“Don’t do it yourself”:**

The chairperson is there mainly to encourage a discussion, not supply it all. His skill lies in making the members feel that they have collectively decided issues.

### 4. **Use of directive verbs:**

The chairman can use stimulating verbs to make members give out the necessary inputs at the meet: substantiate, evidence, shorten, reword, classify, define, explain, elaborate, illustrate, review, describe, summaries, rephrase, simplify.

### 5. **Use names:**

He can get more from the members by using their names for addressing them to generate intimacy (according to the prevailing culture and custom).

### 6. **“Be a traffic cop”:**

The chairperson has to direct the traffic of ideas. He should not be defensive (a goalkeeper) or a preacher (lecturer).

### 7. **State the purpose:**

At the start of the meet he should state the purpose and again at the introduction of every new item of the agenda, so that the members are clear as to what they are supposed to do – examine, suggest or accept.

### 8. **“Don’t reveal your preference”:**

The chairman should reserve his own opinion for the end.

### 9. **Restrict the talk to the issue:**

Members may be talkative, they may be stuck-up. The chairman has to stop the one type and encourage the other.

### 10. **Follow procedure:**



An organisation – or the law – may require that a certain procedure be followed. The chairman **needs to know it and implement it.**

### **Role of participants in a meeting:**

#### **1. Do homework:**

Once the purpose of a meet is known, the attendee has to visualize his/her role and gather information and inputs for use in the meet to make it productive. He/she may consult other members to allocate roles.

#### **2. Be punctual:**

We in India have to specially stress the need to be on time. Our trains, buses and airplanes will run on time when we learn to be punctual for routine meets.

#### **3. Participate actively:**

A member should listen carefully (so that he may be able to summaries what is being said). He should plan what to speak and say it concisely and precisely.

#### **4. PREP formula:**

He should be rational and forceful. PREP means:

State your Position

Reason it out

Give Examples

Restate your Position

#### **5. Showcase your talent:**

A meet is an opportunity to showcase one's talent and get credit for giving useful ideas.

#### **6. Take initiative:**



There may be occasions when a member may propose a motion or second a motion when it sounds right. This requires quickness. Francis Bacon says, “Conference makes a ready man.”

#### **7. Follow rules:**

He should speak when permitted to. He should avoid cross-talk.

#### **8. Take responsibility:**

When tasks are being assigned, a member should come forward to take up suitable responsibilities. If a task is assigned to him/her, then a willing acceptance is also a sign of dynamism.

#### **9. Disagree agreeably:**

All differences should be expressed with courtesy and a friendly feeling.

#### **10. Help to steer the meet:**

If the meeting is going off the track, he/she may remind the chairman to keep it on course.