

Module: 25, Meetings



Items	Description of Module
Subject Name	Management
Paper Name	Business Communication
Module Title	Meetings
Module Id	Module No. - 25
Pre- Requisites	Issue at Hand, Common Interest
Objectives	To study the essentials of conducting an effective meeting
Keywords	Meeting, Agenda, Minutes

QUADRANT-I

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4. Types of Meeting
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1. Module 25: Meetings

2. Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this module, students will be able to

- know essential elements for conducting an effective meeting
- write notice, agenda, and minutes of a meeting

3. Introduction:

In professional setting, meeting means a group of people coming together to discuss on an issue of importance. Alternatively, meetings are a way of getting a group together to handle a common issue. In general, meeting occurs when two or more people meet and discuss. It can be a meeting of groups like Functional Heads, Board of Directors, or an Employee's Association meeting. Every meeting must be productive and seek a specific end to it. For this all the members of the meeting individually contribute to maximize the potential of the team. A meeting solves multiple purposes in an organizational setting. Few of such purposes are:

- a. To give common instructions to a group
- b. To save time on communication
- c. To solve a problem
- d. To recognise efforts of the group
- e. To appraise the situation
- f. To get new ideas
- g. To motivate teams
- h. To resolve conflicts....and so on.

Although meetings have so many positives but if not conducted effectively, it can lead to confusion, conflicts, wastage of time and resources. A poorly conducted meeting can also results into low morale of the members and putting a negative impact on further meetings.

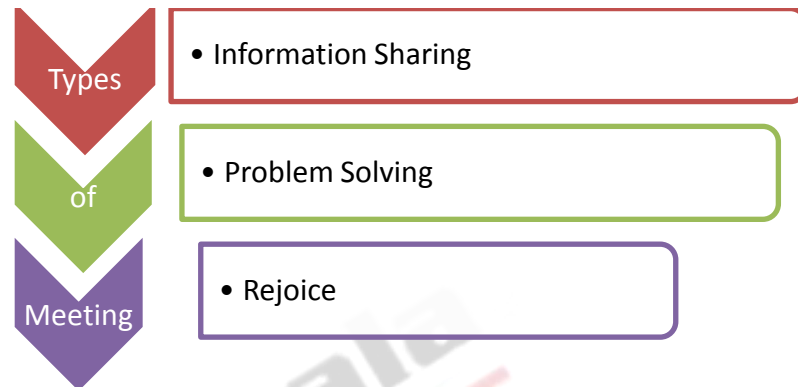
4. Types of Meeting:

Type of a meeting depends upon the purpose it serves. Broadly meetings are conducted for providing information, discussing and solving an issue and sharing a sense of belongingness. Considering these purposes, meeting can be classified into three types:

- **Information Sharing:** Such meetings are conducted to share information or to make something clear. In such meetings, information is shared with the members of the meeting. If a member is having any query on the information provided, a clarification is made. The purpose here is to make members learn and understand the issue at

hand. In such kind of meetings, no suggestions are invited and no solution is sought. The only purpose is to inform the members and make them understand. Following could be the Topic of such meetings:

- Changes in the purchase procedure
- Announcement of new marketing strategy
- Information about company's stand on business ethics
- Financial planning avenues for the employees
- Information about progress of the company in the current fiscal year



- **Problem Solving:** Such kinds of meetings are conducted to seek suggestions and eventually solving a problem. For these meetings, first the issue is discussed at large and then opinions or recommendations of the members are sought. Then all the recommendations are reviewed on their pros and cons. Finally committee arrives at a solution. It is not necessary that in every meeting member arrive at a solution. Many times no decision is made. In such a scenario another meeting is called at a later date for further discussions and deliberations. Generally, problem solving meetings are conducted to handle issues faced by the company from daily basis to six months. Following could be the Topic of such meetings:

- Fixation of performance appraisal criteria for employees
- Strategy to increase market share of the company
- An act of misbehaviour by an employee
- Strike at the company
- Requirement of training needs for the employees

- **Rejoicing:** The purpose of such meeting is to celebrate the success. During these meetings, few members are praised and honoured for their contribution to the organisation. Such meetings are conducted to create a sense of belongingness among the members. These meetings are also conducted to motivate the employees. Generally, celebration meetings are casual and informal in nature.

Apart from above classification, meetings can also be divided on the basis of compulsion of its conduct like statutory meetings. A statutory meeting like Annual General Meeting needs to be conducted within a specified time.

5. Role of Chairperson in a Meeting

Chairperson is one who heads the meeting. If you are appointed as Chairperson then you are having a responsibility for smooth conduct of the meeting. You have to ensure that meeting serves its purpose. Chairing a meeting requires patience, understanding of the issue at hand, ability to guide the discussion, and sense of humour. A Chairperson has to adopt different leadership styles at different point of time to steer the meeting towards a conclusion. An authoritarian leader dominates the discussion and praises those who agree with his or her viewpoint. Such situation stops free flow of opinions from members. On the other hand,

participative leaders give every chance to all the members to present their view. In such situation, it takes a lot of time to come to a conclusion. So, a Chairperson has to strike a balance between these extreme styles of leadership. It is pertinent that chairing a meeting means handling a group of people. Such group can have members who are poor listeners, arrogant, talkative, and submissive. The Chairperson has to ensure that viewpoint of every member is put forward. At the conclusion of the meeting, it is the duty of the Chairperson to clearly state the results of discussion, decision reached, and future course of action. In short, Chairperson of a meeting has to perform following tasks:

- Planning and making arrangements for the meeting
- Steering the discussion
- Enabling the group to reach to a conclusion
- Creating a plan for proper implementation of conclusion

6. **Role of Members in a Meeting:**

A person who is invited to attend a meeting is known as member. Role of a member is equally important as of a Chairperson. These are the members who actually contribute with their viewpoints and queries. The effectiveness of a meeting totally depends upon the conduct of its members and the quality of their input. To improve their contribution, the members attending a meeting could follow these rules:

- Homework: Always go through the agenda items before attending a meeting. Have an understanding about agenda items and collect the related information. A knowledgeable member is always an asset for any meeting.
- Be punctual: Always be on time to attend the meeting. It shows your sincerity towards the organisation's interests. A meeting started on time also finishes on time.
- Attitude matters: Always attend the meeting with a positive frame of mind. Try to contribute constructively towards the issue at hand. A positive attitude of members is essential to come to a conclusion.
- Respect: Treat all the members attending the meeting with respect. Do not try to display your position while discussing an issue during the meeting. Follow the simple rule of 'Give respect, get respect'.
- Phone manners: Put your cell phones on silent or vibration mode. Any disturbance caused by a ringing cell phone is highly annoying. In case of emergency, go outside the room and attend the call.
- Be a good listener: It is very important to patiently listen to others viewpoint. Even if you disagree on any aspect, do not interrupt the speaker. Let the conversation finish before you present your views.
- Stay on the agenda: Always discuss only about issues under the agenda items. Never discuss anything beyond the purview of the meeting. Discussing personal issues in a meeting should be avoided. Once discussion is complete, do not start discussing the same issue under a different agenda item.
- Body language: Never point fingers towards others while discussing. Always seem alert while others are speaking.
- Objections: In case of any disagreement with others viewpoint, always address Chairperson for your objection.

7. **Information of a Meeting:**

Before calling a meeting, it is essential to notify all the members about it. This information must be sent to all the members who have a right to attend the meeting. The proper circulation of the information has to be ensured by the secretary in consultation with the Chairperson of the meeting. Such a notice must mention information about the day, date, time, and venue of the meeting. If decided, agenda items may be mentioned in the notice or attached separately.

It has to be ensured that notice reaches all the members within reasonable time before the meeting.

A sample notice of meeting

Heera Retail Stores
Regd. Office: 86, Rani Road, Reewa- 600101

June 30, 2002

The Sixth meeting of the Management Committee will be held at 4.00 p.m. on Saturday, July 7, 2002 at First Floor, 86, Rani Road, Reewa.

Raj Kumar
Secretary

To All Members of Management Committee

8. **Agenda of a Meeting:**

A meeting agenda states the activities that will take place during the meeting. An agenda provides a guideline for the members to think and prepare about issues to be discussed. It steers the meeting towards completion. An agenda also ensures that no issue is left unattended during the meeting. Generally, similar format for writing agenda is adopted by organizations. For example, first agenda item for most of the meetings is 'confirmation of minutes of the previous meeting'. Similarly, the last agenda item is 'any other matter with the permission of the Chairperson'. Rest of the agenda items are put on the basis of their priority. A little modification can be made in the standard format as per the requirement.

A sample of agenda

Heera Retail Stores
Rani Road, Reewa- 600101

June 30, 2002

Agenda for the Sixth meeting of the Management Committee to be held at 4.00 p.m. on Saturday, July 7, 2002 at First Floor, 86, Rani Road, Reewa

- 6.01 Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting.
- 6.02 Chairman's report.
- 6.03 Appointment of Chief Accountant.
- 6.04 Proposal for purchase of 2 delivery vans.
- 6.05 Problems in complaint handling mechanism.
- 6.06 Any other matter with the permission of the Chairman.

Raj Kumar
Secretary

Generally, the agenda items are numbered. A number before decimals signifies the series of meeting i.e. Sixth meeting in above example. Numbers after the decimal indicates the agenda item i.e. first item, second item and so on. So, 6.01 means first agenda item of sixth meeting.

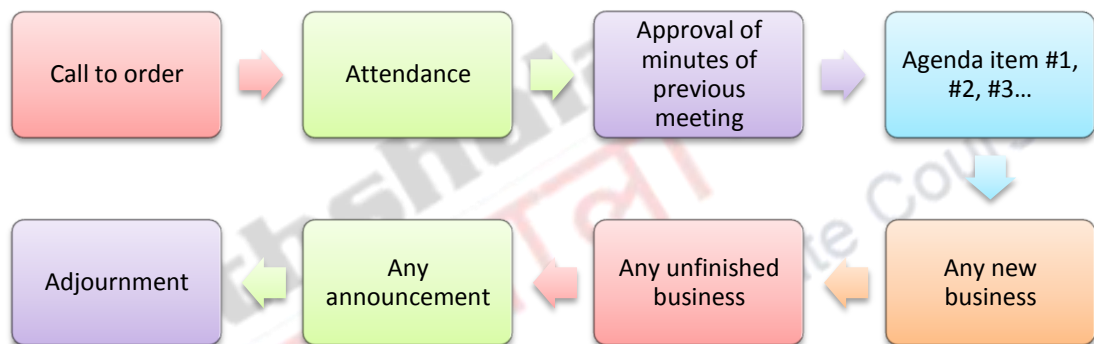
9. **Quorum of a Meeting:**

Quorum refers to the minimum number of members (out of all the members called) that must attend the meeting in order to make the transactions of the meeting valid. If the quorum in meeting is complete then its proceeding may be considered as valid. As such there is no fixed number for a quorum to be completed. Decision about the number for a quorum generally rests upon the committee.

The object of the quorum rule is to ensure transparency in business during the meeting. Another purpose of quorum is to prevent members of the committee from abusing their power. Quorum also dictates the reasonable representation of members for a meeting. Any meeting conducted under the absence of quorum would be treated as unauthorized and any resolution passed during that meeting stands null and void. The concept of quorum signifies the role of attendance in meeting. A proper record of attendance is maintained for each meeting that certifies the completion of quorum and hence validity of the resolutions passed.

10. Procedure to conduct a Meeting:

Once information about the meeting is notified and agenda items distributed to all the eligible members, a standard procedure is being followed to conduct the meeting. The procedure is as under:



- The Chairperson calls the meeting to order. It is equivalent to opening or starting of a meeting.
- Attendance is taken as per the prepared list of members. In this list members are recorded as present, absent, late, or proxy. It also indicates apologies for absence.
- Minutes of previous meeting are approved. Those minutes are read before the members. The Chairperson asks for any corrections. If not, minutes got approved as read.
- Each agenda item is discussed one by one as per the sequence. It might include reports for information from various departments and committees. If any recommendation is sought, it is discussed and made subsequently.
- The Chair asks for discussing any new business.
- If any unfinished business is left over from previous meetings, the Chair prepares a list of such items. Such items then discussed one by one.
- If members of the group wish to make any announcement in the interest of the group, a chance is provided to them by the Chair.
- After discussing all agenda items the Chairperson declares adjournment of meeting with a vote of thanks.

11. Minutes of the Meeting:

Minutes of the meeting are the official record of discussions and decisions at the meeting. The minutes of the meeting are generally written by the secretary in consultation with the Chairperson. It is always good for a company to keep a record of minutes of meeting. In certain cases, it is mandatory under the law to maintain minutes of meeting. The minutes mention the main points of discussion and decision taken thereof. The person drafting minutes of meeting should doubly check the facts and decisions before making it

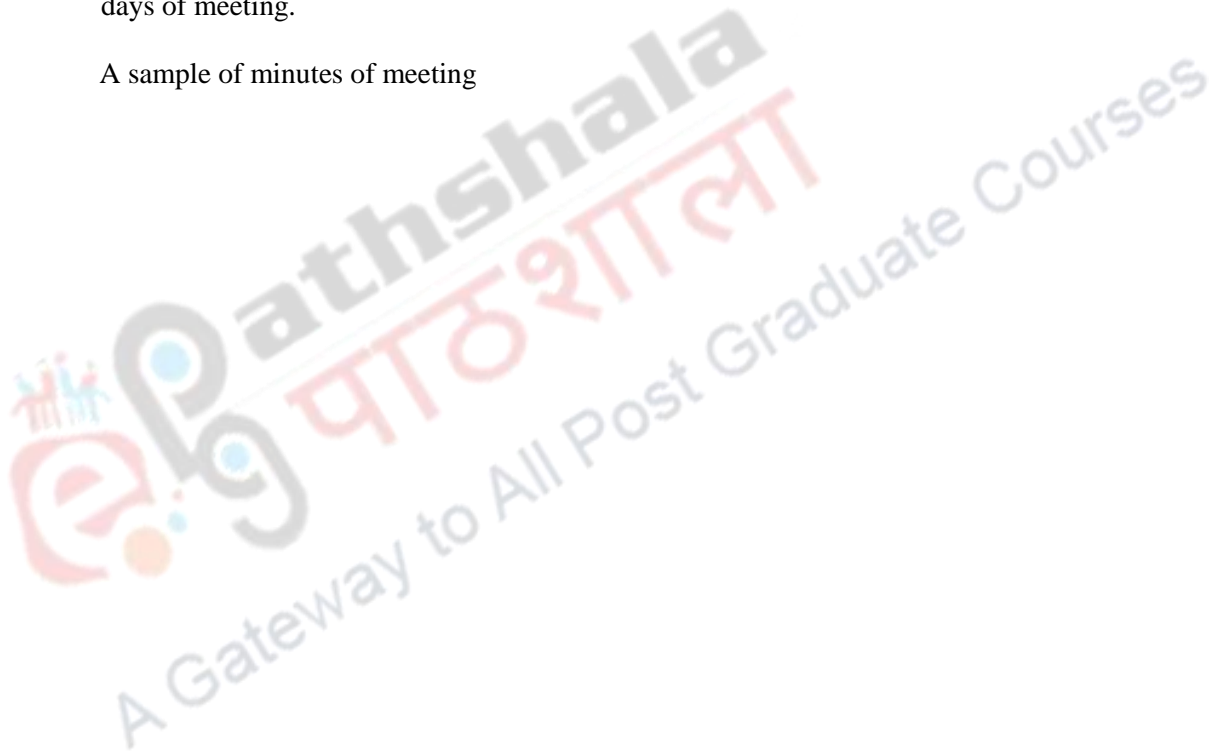
public. It is advisable to circulate a pre final draft of the minutes among the concerned members for their observations. Minutes become effective only when they have been read at the next meeting.

For creation of minutes of meeting document a standard format is followed. It includes items in a particular sequence. These items are:

- a. Name of the department/ unit/ chapter
- b. Date, time and venue of Meeting
- c. Members Present and Members Apologies
- d. Reading and Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- e. Agenda Item #1. Discussion held. Action taken.
- f. Agenda Item #2. Discussion held. Action taken.
- g. Announcements (if any)
- h. Future Agenda Items
- i. Next Meeting
- j. Signatures of secretary and Chairperson.

Once finalised, these minutes should be circulated to all the members for review within seven days of meeting.

A sample of minutes of meeting



Heera Retail Stores
Rani Road, Reewa- 600101

Minutes of the Sixth meeting of the Management Committee
held at the office of the company (First Floor, 86, Rani Road,
Reewa) at 4.00 p.m. on Saturday, July 7, 2002

Present:

Sh. Rajesh Kumar	}	Chairman
Sh. Ravi Kumar		Members
Sh. Kamal Mehta		
Sh. L R Lohia		
Sh. GV Rao		

In attendance:

Sh. Raj Kumar, Secretary

- 6.01 *Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting.*
The minutes of the meeting held on January 10, 2002 were approved by the committee and signed by the Chairman.
- 6.02 *Chairman's report.*
The Chairman presented the annual report and appraised the committee members about the progress of organisation during last quarter. He also mentioned the plans to be adopted for next quarter.
- 6.03 *Appointment of Chief Accountant.*
The secretary reported the burden on accounts department due to expansion of operations of the company. He proposed for appointment of a full time Chief Accountant.
The committee approved the proposal and directed the secretary to initiate the appointment process at the earliest.
- 6.04 *Proposal for purchase of 2 delivery vans.*
The purchase of 1 delivery van was approved. The secretary was directed to invite quotations from the approved agencies within a week.
- 6.05 *Problems in complaint handling mechanism.*
The secretary reported customer dissatisfaction due to delay in handling of complaints by the customer care department.
The committee resolved to introduce automated complaint handling system for faster handling of complaints.
- 6.06 *Next meeting of Management Committee.*
It was decided to hold the meeting of Management Committee on December 7, 2002 at the current venue. The secretary was directed to notify all the members accordingly.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Rajesh Kumar
Chairman

Raj Kumar
Secretary

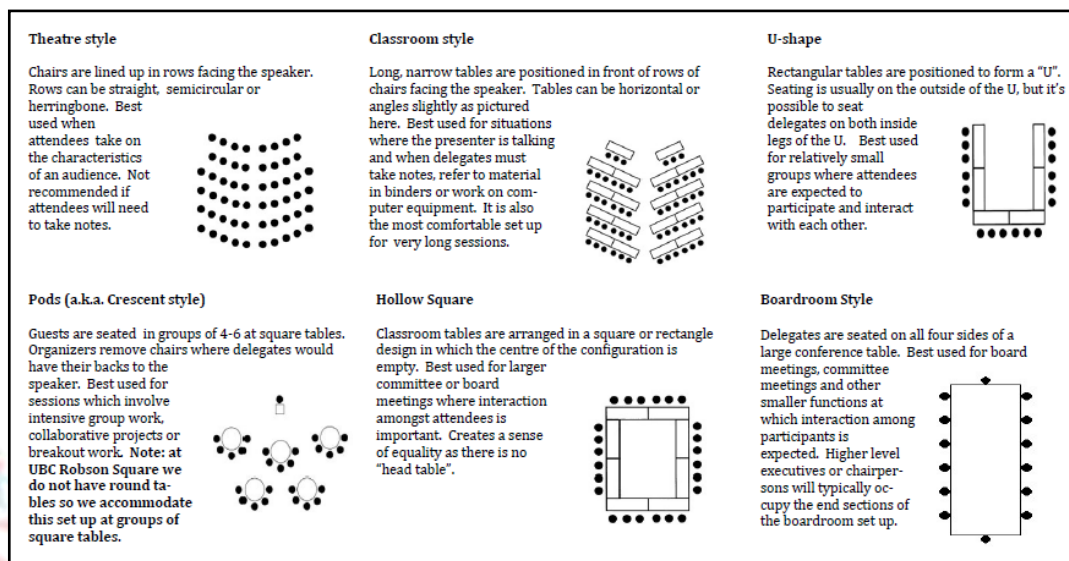
July 21, 2002

In case, any member of the group holds a viewpoint different from the rest of the group, such member is allowed to record the difference of opinion in minutes of the meeting. Such inclusion can be made through a 'Note of Dissent'. For writing a Note of Dissent the member has to provide reasons for holding a different view. This Note is appended to minutes of meeting and considered as part of official document.

12. Meeting Room Layouts:

For conducting a meeting, a proper seating arrangement is essential. A proper seating arrangement ensures smooth flow of communication and avoids confusion among the members. Seating arrangement has an impact on the participants and eventually on meeting outcome. Each change in the arrangement changes the way participants will interact. So, it is important to select the seating arrangement carefully for serving the purpose of the meeting.

There exist some well known meeting room layouts, such as:



Source: <http://robsonsquare.ubc.ca/files/2010/11/Room-Set-Up-Guide.pdf>. Accessed on September 23, 2015.

Each style is having its pros and cons. Before deciding a particular format, the organiser of a meeting must know the purpose of the meeting, how many people are attending the meeting, position of each member, requirements of the audio-visual aids, expected duration of the meeting etc. Such information becomes handy in deciding a suitable layout for conducting a meeting.

13. Summary:

Meetings are an excellent way of handling issues and sharing information. Every organization must ensure that their meetings become more constructive than boring. Most importantly there must be an issue worth discussing at a meeting. Meetings are generally conducive for three purposes namely information sharing, problem solving, and rejoicing. Chairperson as well as the members of the meeting must understand their roles and responsibilities. Any meeting has few important elements like Notification of meeting, Agenda of meeting, and Minutes of meeting. The purpose of notification is to inform all the members of the committee about the meeting. Agenda of the meeting states the business to be transacted at the meeting. Minutes of the meeting provides a snapshot of the business transacted and resolution passed over various agenda items. The organisers of meeting should clearly understand the purpose of each element. For writing Notice, Agenda and Minutes standard formats or guidelines should be adopted in order to avoid any ambiguity. Seating arrangement for a meeting is another important decision area, as it impacts the flow of communication and eventually the outcome of a meeting.



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