

Speaking Skills

Meetings

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to;

- Learn the terminology used in meetings
- Conduct effectively meetings & use language productively
- Participate in meetings confidently

01 What do the underline words in this article mean? explain in your own word. Lets find the terminology.

I don't know how to chair a meeting!

I've been asked to chair a meeting about the Christmas office party, but I'm incredibly nervous as I've never chaired one before. Is there a secret for success?

You may never have chaired a meeting but as you've probably been to lots you'll have seen it done well and badly. Think about the things that please and annoy you and build on them. (1) Make sure everyone has the agenda well in advance, and check that you know enough about the participants and issues to be discussed. Arrange for the (2) room to be cool rather than warm; people will be less likely to go to sleep.

See yourself as a referee whose job it is to ensure fair play through careful watching and listening. You must ensure that the timid have a chance to (3) say what they want; deal (4) in a diplomatic way with the argumentative and to be kind to the (5) person you have asked to take notes. Getting that individual on your side is essential if you want the record to reflect your desired outcomes. It's normal to suggest

what should be left out of the minutes and how any difficult bits should be phrased. Make sure you stick to the (6) time you have allowed for each point and keep things moving by not letting people (7) wander off the subject. Get decisions made and recorded, even if it's only to postpone matters until the next meeting. If someone is being difficult, defuse things by offering to continue the discussion personally at a more appropriate time.

If the meeting is likely to be more than a couple of hours long, try to include a break at the mid-point; it acts as a marker and stops people getting restless.

Aim to leave everyone feeling they have had a chance to say what they wanted to say and gain lasting and well-deserved popularity by finishing (8) when you said the meeting would finish. ■

Task

Match number 1-7 with the opposite side

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 1 take | a a minute-taker |
| 2 appoint | b the minutes |
| 3 circulate | c time |
| 4 allocate | d the agenda |
| 5 move on | e to the next point |
| 6 avoid | f on time |
| 7 finish | g digressions |

2.Types of meetings

Word combinations with 'meeting'

arrange set up fix		organize a meeting
bring forward		make a meeting earlier than originally decided
put back postpone	a meeting	make a meeting later than originally planned
cancel		not have a meeting after all
run chair		be in charge of a meeting
attend		go to a meeting
miss		not go to a meeting

Types of meeting

Meetings come in all shapes and sizes, of course. Here are some types:

- **chat** (informal discussion) with colleagues at the coffee machine.
- **brainstorming** among colleagues: where as many ideas as possible are produced quickly, to be evaluated later.
- **project meeting / team meeting** of employees involved in a particular activity.
- **department/departmental meeting.**
- **meeting with suppliers**, for example to negotiate prices for an order.
- **meeting with a customer**, for example to discuss a contract.
- **board meeting**: an official, formal meeting of a company's directors.
- **Annual general meeting / AGM** (BrE); **annual meeting** (AmE): where shareholders discuss the company's annual report.
- **EGM**: extraordinary general meeting: a shareholders' meeting to discuss an important issue such as a proposed merger.

Task

Get in to groups and discuss which type of meetings would you be most likely to hear each of these things?

- 1 I'm pleased to announce another good year for shareholders of this company.
- 2 I know this sounds crazy, but how about giving away 100,000 free samples?
- 3 Things in the sales department are getting out of control. We should all start making a real effort.
- 4 So, you think you can provide 10,000 a month at a unit cost of £4.90?
- 5 Have you heard? Suzanne is being fired: apparently her sales figures aren't good enough.
- 6 That's a deal then. Looking forward to working with you. I'm sure you won't be disappointed.
- 7 Amazingly, we're ahead of schedule on this project.
- 8 I recommend to shareholders that you accept Megabook's offer for our company.
- 9 As you know, Megabook wants to buy this company. As chief financial officer, what do you think of their offer, Saleem?

How was the meeting?

Some colleagues are discussing a meeting they have just come out of.

Anil: I thought it was very **productive**.

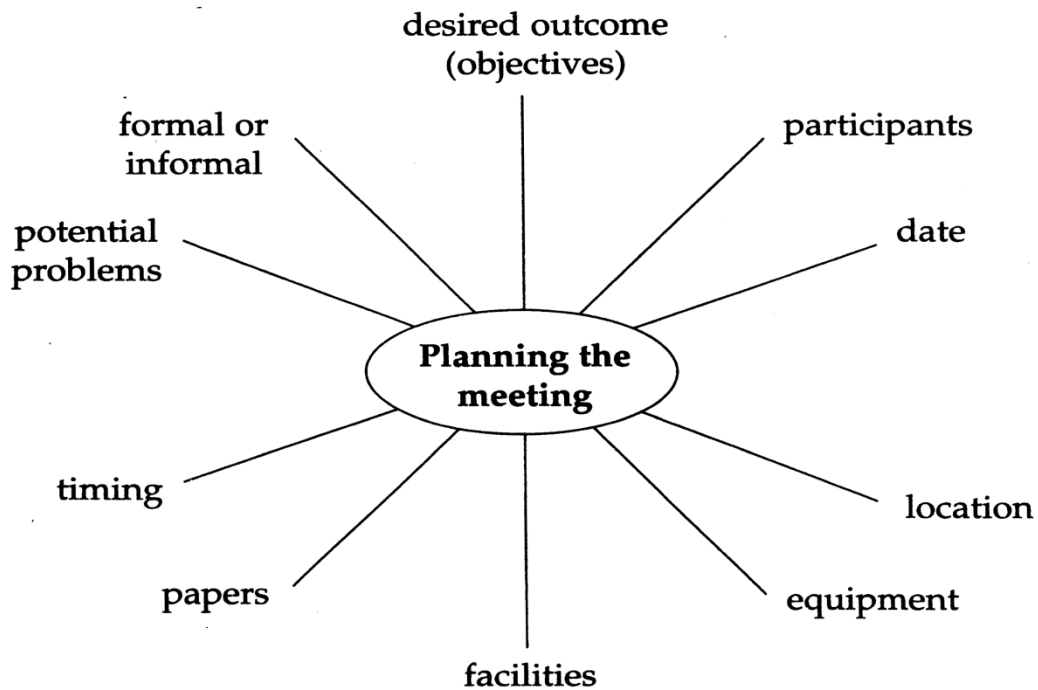
Juliet: Well, I thought it was a complete **waste of time**. I didn't hear anything I didn't already know.

Barbara: I agree with Anil. I felt we had some very **useful discussions**, and that we reached an agreement that was good for both sides. We certainly **covered a lot of ground**. It was incredible the number of things we got **through**.

Juliet: But there were too many **digressions**. John was **rambling** and kept **wandering off the point**. He just uses meetings as a chance to show off. Just like a lot of men: he just wanted to show how powerful he is and what a good talker he is.

Anil: But to be fair, the chair really **kept things moving**: she encouraged people to be brief and to **stick to the point** and we achieved a lot in a short time. Anyway, I learned a lot and I think they listened to what we had to say.

3. Planning the meeting



Meeting Preparation Checklist

1. What is the purpose of the meeting?
2. What is the desired outcome of the meeting?
3. Who should attend the meeting?
4. What is the date of the meeting?
5. Where is the meeting to be held?
6. What facilities and equipment are needed?
7. How long should the meeting take?
8. Is it a formal or an informal meeting?
9. What papers do I need to prepare?(Invitation, agenda, minutes of previous meeting, working papers)
10. What problems could occur?

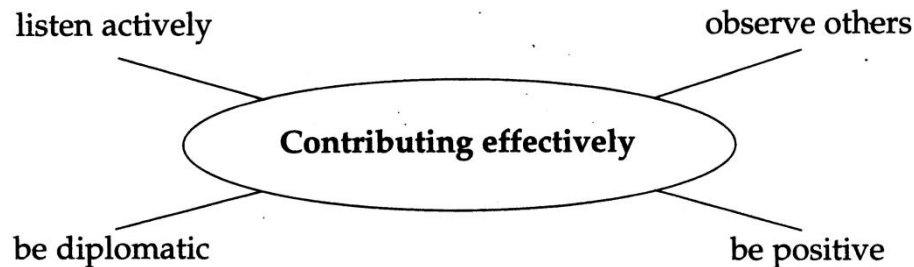
4. Contributing Effectively

DO

- obey the ground rules
- be positive
- separate people from problems
- keep to the topic being discussed
- use clear simple language
- allow others to finish
- ask for clarification if you don't understand

DON'T

- monopolise the discussion
- become emotional or too argumentative
- make personal criticisms
- digress
- use long complicated sentences
- interrupt too much
- pretend that you understand



Activity

You are the newly elected president of A rehabilitation centre. Have a meeting with your team to discuss the new ways of improving and upgrading the rehabilitation centre. (Elect the secretary, the treasurer, the editor and the members for the association)