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# Collaborative project – Professional Documentation

Group Independent Study

Groups of 4 or 5

Choose a topic that is in some way related to business and/or communications; choose something of interest to your group. Your group will meet 4 times throughout the term. For each meeting, a different group member will be the facilitator, and a different group member will be the minute taker; ensure that each group member has one turn for each role.

An agenda must be submitted on Blackboard **prior to each meeting**, and the minutes must be submitted on Blackboard after the meeting. The minutes must include the names of all who attended the meeting, a list of actions taken since the last meeting, and an outline of what the group members are responsible for before attending the next meeting.

## The assignment

First, you have to think of a problem. Next, you have to think of how to fix it. You must be able to connect your problem to either business or communication.

Examples

* A Political Issue of some kind
* Suggestions for solving a social problem
* A marketing strategy for a fictitious or real company or product
* How to motivate employees (or encourage students to attend class)
* Best practices for a fictitious or real business use of social media
* What colour packaging/brand-name would be best for X product (who is the audience? Etc.)

Your group is responsible for the following: dividing tasks, setting parameters, researching, gathering, and organizing information.

Groups will meet during class for the first meeting. Other meetings are to be scheduled by the group. Projects will be presented during class (Week 10).

Each group member must present a portion of the project.

Agenda Today:

1. Find a group
2. Appoint a facilitator for the first meeting
3. Brainstorm / choose idea(s)
4. Set schedule for minute taking and meeting facilitation
5. Brainstorm project outline
6. Assign first tasks – What resources do you need? Who will search for what?
7. Set next meeting time and date (next Tuesday)
8. Adjourn Meeting

# Role of the Facilitator:

1. Write the agenda prior to the meeting. [See Appendix A](#_Appendix_A).
2. Start the meeting on time
   1. review the previous meeting’s minutes
   2. follow the agenda
3. Encourage group discussion to get all points of view. [See Appendix B](#_Appendix_B) for useful phrases.
   1. turn questions back to the group for their input
   2. compliment and thank people for their input
   3. ask open-ended questions
   4. ask the quieter people for their thoughts, and tactfully interrupt the longwinded participants
4. Stay on top of the topic being discussed, but don’t micromanage
   1. help the discussion move along and stay on task
   2. lean forward, pay attention when others speak
   3. don’t be afraid of silence – sometimes people need time to think
5. Don't use your position as facilitator to impose your personal ideas and opinions on the group
   1. keep your own comments to a minimum
   2. let others speak first
   3. avoid criticizing the ideas of others - your position gives your comments undue extra weight
6. Agree on deadlines
7. Follow up on tasks assigned, and delegate new ones
8. Give accurate and honest feedback
9. Guide the discussion toward closure
   1. restate people's comments to make sure everyone understands
   2. summarize what has been accomplished and what is left to resolve
   3. suggest when it's time to wrap up and make decisions or take action

# Role of the Minute Taker:

Take minutes (notes) on the meeting. Minutes of the meeting serve as a record of decisions and details.

**Use the agenda items as headings.**

**Be sure to place your name at the top of the minutes you take; I need to see who wrote the minutes.**

**During the meeting the minute taker will record the following:**

1. Name of person taking the minutes
2. Date, time, and place of meeting
3. List of people attending and any members who were absent
4. Time the meeting was called to order
5. Approval of the previous meeting's minutes and any amendments
6. Summary of reports, announcements, and other information shared
7. Proposals, resolutions, motions, amendments, a summary of the discussion, and final disposition (if you are using formal parliamentary procedure, record who made the motion and who seconded it)
8. Time of adjournment
9. Next meeting date, time and location

**After the meeting**

* Read and check the minutes
* Follow-up with others as needed
* Submit meeting minutes and agenda through blackboard – write your name at the top of the minutes

**References**

* Johns, S. (2006). *Taking minutes meeting guide*. Retrieved from libcom.org

### Appendix A

Develop an agenda

An agenda gives people time to plan, to think over the discussion points, to do assignments, and to bring necessary information and materials. The agenda can be adjusted, even during the meeting.

The agenda must be distributed, either in advance or at the meeting (upload on Blackboard). This helps keep people on topic and lets them know what will be covered and when

An agenda should include all of the following items that apply to your group:

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Additions to the Agenda
4. Approval of Minutes from last meeting
5. Matters Arising from Minutes
6. Objective of This Meeting
7. Facilitator’s Report – Assess Progress
8. Review of Tasks Assigned from Last Meeting
9. Assigning Roles and Responsibilities
10. Other Business
11. Next Meeting

If there is any disagreement over the order of the agenda, then this should be quickly discussed and voted on at the start of the meeting. If the facilitator thinks there is a lot to get through, it may make sense to set a maximum amount of time that can be spent discussing particular topics right at the start of the meeting.

### Appendix B

Phrases to help the facilitator

* Thank you all for coming; let’s get started.
* The purpose of this meeting….
* Thank you, Carolyn, for agreeing to take minutes today….
* John, could you give us an update on…
* Sally, what is the status of…..
* Gerald has agreed to ……
* Would you like to add anything, Mary?
* Genevieve, I would like to hear your feedback on ….
* Let’s stay focused on the agenda.
* There seems to be a misunderstanding/ miscommunication. Let’s review what was said…..
* Are you willing to accept ….. as a temporary solution?
* Why don’t we try and sort this out by…..
* Can we agree on ……..?
* I see your point, how about…..
* That brings us to another related issue….
* Can you explain your point again, please?
* I must object to…..
* Clearly we do not all agree; however, perhaps if…
* Would you mind looking into…
* If Mary is going to …., then Sam, can you do…..?
* What would you like to do? We all need to contribute….
* Would you prefer……
* Why don’t we……
* My suggestion is…..
* It is in our best interest to…..