

##### KTP Module 1

##### Managing Meetings

# Managing Meetings

## A picture containing rug Description automatically generatedMeetings

As a manager, team leader or team member, you will attend or chair all kinds of meetings in a typical week. Meetings can be formal or informal in nature and will range from one-way briefings to your team, where you do most of the

talking, to fully collaborative problem-solving meetings, involving everyone. Regardless of the purpose, you will be judged by how well you run a meeting.

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Description automatically generatedActivity**

In the table below, list some of the meetings that you attend, or chair, during a typical week at work and give a rough estimate of how long each meeting lasts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Meeting Name** | **Typical Duration (minutes)** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |
| 3. |  |
| 4. |  |
| 5. |  |
| 6. |  |
| 7. |  |
| 8. |  |
| 9. |  |

## A picture containing rug Description automatically generatedTime is Money

Meetings should provide a benefit for everyone who is attending. Yet, all too often, the output or purpose of a meeting is unclear, it is poorly managed, or the

attendees have little to contribute or gain from attending. It is important, therefore, that you assess the cost-effectiveness of a meeting before you go ahead and call one.

The bottom line is that meetings can be expensive so, if there is no real need for one, then don’t meet. Is there is an easier, or more efficient way to achieve what you need?

Have a look at the table below. If demonstrates that, purely on the salaries of those attending, meetings can become expensive quite quickly!

The table is based on a typical manager, or employee, working 40 hours a week and with 27 days holiday per annum. It excludes weekends and statutory holidays and assumes 5 hours a week for lunches and breaks.

Additional company costs such as national insurance and pension contributions have also been included in the calculations.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Annual  Salary | 10  Minutes | 30  Minutes | 1  Hour | 3  Hours | Whole  day |
| £25,000 | **£3.20** | **£9.65** | **£19.25** | **£57.80** | **£154.15** |
| £30,000 | **£3.85** | **£11.55** | **£23.10** | **£69.35** | **£184.95** |
| £35,000 | **£4.50** | **£13.50** | **£26.95** | **£80.90** | **£215.80** |
| £40,000 | **£5.15** | **£15.40** | **£30.85** | **£92.50** | **£246.60** |
| £45,000 | **£5.80** | **£17.35** | **£34.70** | **£104.05** | **£277.45** |
| £50,000 | **£6.40** | **£19.25** | **£38.55** | **£115.60** | **£308.25** |
| £55,000 | **£7.05** | **£21.20** | **£42.40** | **£127.15** | **£339.10** |
| £60,000 | **£7.70** | **£23.10** | **£46.25** | **£138.70** | **£369.90** |

This may not seem like much for an individual manager but, if you consider that most meetings will have several managers attending, typically for 1 or 2 hours and that this happens several times every week, the cost soon mounts up.

For example, 5 managers, on salaries of £50,000, all spending 10 hours a week in meetings, is costing the company almost £2,000 every week.

This does not include the ‘Opportunity Cost’, i.e. every hour you spend in a meeting, is an hour when you could have been doing something else, for example: managing a critical issue, solving problems, earning the company money, keeping a customer happy, working on a key project or saving on costs. It is estimated that, if we take this ‘Opportunity Cost’ into account, the actual costs in the table above could be at least 4 times higher.

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Description automatically generatedActivity**

Pick one of the meetings you listed in the task above (preferably the longest one, with the most people) and work out the total cost of running that meeting.

If it is a regular meeting, how much does it cost for the whole year? What would the figures be if you include the ‘Opportunity Cost’?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Cost Per Meeting | Cost Per Year | Opportunity Cost Per Year |
|  |  |  |

## A picture containing rug Description automatically generatedPlanning Your Meeting

If a meeting is necessary, you should prepare effectively to make your meeting as efficient as possible. Firstly, you need to establish the meeting’s purpose

and intended outputs.

You then need to decide who needs to be there and why. Are they there to contribute ideas, help with a decision, be informed about progress, etc.? If there is no good reason for someone to attend, then don’t invite them – it will save your time, and theirs.

You also need to plan the logistics. Where is the meeting to be held? Is there sufficient space? Is the environment conducive? Will you provide refreshments? Do you need any specific equipment? And don’t forget to allow for comfort breaks if the meeting is longer than an hour.

If you are expecting the attendees to prepare anything beforehand, make sure they are briefed, and that any information is distributed beforehand to allow time for prior reading.

## The Agenda

A good meeting starts with a good agenda. How often have you attended a meeting where…?

* there was no agenda given out before the meeting.
* the agenda was given out at the start of the meeting.
* the agenda was just a list of things to be discussed.
* The agenda includes minutes of the previous meeting and AOB

We recommend using the enhanced agenda on the next page, or your own variation of this. You only need to create the template once – after that you are just filling in the gaps.

This is always sent out before the meeting. Depending on the nature of the meeting, the agenda can be sent to attendees several days or even weeks in advance and people are invited to suggest any changes or additions they wish to make before the final version is published. This eliminates the need for ‘Any Other Business’ – people have had ample opportunity to contribute to the agenda, so why waste time with AOB. An agenda item that is unplanned and can waste an inordinate amount of time.

We have a simple rule – no AOB unless it’s a total emergency. You’d be surprised how quickly people get used to this rule.

The agenda should not be just a list of bullet points, but a framework for attendees to follow during the meeting. It helps to act as a briefing document if it is distributed beforehand and gives people time to prepare.

It establishes a ‘time contract’ that people can follow. You can use it to move the conversation on if someone is rambling. As you can see in the example below, it helps all attendees if time is allocated to each item in advance. If Sally Smith is only covering the ‘budget report’ item on the agenda, and is not really involved in the other items, she only needs to be there from 10:15-11:00.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Meeting Agenda | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Title:** | Weekly Project Team Meeting | | **Date:** | | 5th May 20xx | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  |  | | |  |
|  | **Called By:** | John Doe | | **Start Time:** | | 10:00 | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  |  | | |  |
|  | **Venue:** | Conference Room | | **End Time:** | | 12:00 | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  | |  | |  |
|  | **Attendees:** | 1. John Doe 2. Sally Smith 3. Hitesh Mistry 4. Shelly Guevara | | **Please**  **Bring:** | | Laptop with project plan | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | **Purpose:** | Discuss financial targets on Project Y and review conference opportunities | | | | | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | **Outcomes:** | 1. Decision on Project Y budget 2. List of potential conference opportunities | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Agenda Items** | | | **Person responsible** | | **To be accomplished** | | | | | **Time & Duration** | |
| Agenda review | | | John Doe | |  | | | | | 10:00 (5 MIN) | |
| Meeting expectations | | | John Doe | |  | | | | | 10:05 (10 MIN) | |
| Project Y budget report | | | Sally Smith | | Decision/Approval | | | | | 10:15 (45 MIN) | |
| Conference report | | | Hitesh Mistry | | Shortlist conferences | | | | | 11:00 (45 MIN) | |
| Summary and next steps | | | Shelly Guevara | |  | | | | | 11:45 (15 MIN) | |
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| **Meeting Facilitator:** | | | | | Shelly Guevara | | | | | | |

**A picture containing drawing, light

Description automatically generatedActivity**

Use the template below to draft an agenda for a meeting that you host or participate in regularly.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Meeting Agenda | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Title:** |  | | **Date:** | |  | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  |  | | |  |
|  | **Called By:** |  | | **Start Time:** | |  | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  |  | | |  |
|  | **Venue:** |  | | **End Time:** | |  | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | |  | | |  | |  | |  |
|  | **Attendees:** |  | | **Please**  **Bring:** | |  | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | **Purpose:** |  | | | | | | | | |  |
|  |  |  | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | **Outcomes:** | 1.  2.  3.  4.  5. | | | | | | | | |  |
|  | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Agenda Items** | | | **Person responsible** | | **To be accomplished** | | | | | **Time & Duration** | |
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| **Meeting Facilitator:** | | | | |  | | | | | | |

## A picture containing rug Description automatically generatedSome suggestions for a successful meeting

If a meeting is necessary, it is important that you follow some basic ground rules to make the event as successful as possible for everyone involved.

There are some basic principles that you can follow that will help to ensure this. These may not work for every situation but, for the majority of meetings, they are tried and tested.

**A picture containing light, drawing

Description automatically generatedUse a Facilitator**

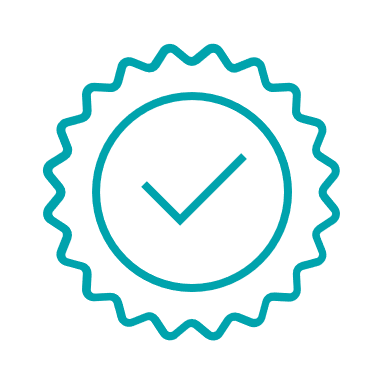
A facilitator is someone who manages the ‘process’ of the meeting. The role is different to that of the chairperson, or the meeting owner. The facilitator will ensure that the agenda is followed, record ideas on a flipchart, keep the meeting on track if it wanders off course, stop the ramblers, hurry people along if their time is running out, ensure that everyone is heard and involved – they are the ‘oil’ that makes the process run smoothly.

In regular meetings, with the same people, the role of facilitator can be alternated i.e. if I did it last week, someone else does it this week.

Chances are, you’ve never tried this approach but, give it a go – you’ll be surprised how effective it can be!

**Follow the agenda**

The agenda and the timings for individual items are there for a reason. When you say the meeting is 60 minutes, it’s important to keep to 60 minutes. This is called a ‘time contract’. People have given up their own time to attend. They may have other things to do when that time runs out and it is presumptuous to assume that they have nothing better to do, just because your meeting runs over.

The facilitator can help, by reminding people that their slot is nearly over and hurrying them along. Remember, people will always forgive you when your meeting finishes early – they are less forgiving when it runs over.

**Follow good meeting behaviours**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Do** | **Don’t** |
| **Participate openly** | **Come with a hidden agenda** |
| **Focus on problems, not people** | **Ramble** |
| **Listen actively to others** | **Launch personal attacks** |
| **Get to the point…no war stories** | **Derail the meeting’s purpose** |
| **Build on others' ideas** | **Look for the ‘fatal flaw’** |
| **Set up win-win situations** | **Violate time contracts** |
| **Value all ideas** | **Fall asleep** |
| **Have fun** | **Have sub-meetings going on** |

**A close up of a logo

Description automatically generatedRecord ideas on a flipchart**

A flipchart allows you to record the output from a meeting in real time. Part of the facilitator’s role will be to add ideas to the flipchart as the meeting unfolds.

The flipchart provides an instant record of the meeting content that helps the group to focus and encourages participation and creativity. Unlike meeting minutes, which are issued after the event, participants can clearly see what has been recorded and can correct any mistakes as they happen.

A flipchart depersonalises ideas, so it is never a question of “so and so said…”

We typically use two flipcharts. One is used to record ideas and comments and the second one to record actions arising from the meeting (called ‘Next Steps’). This second flipchart typically has the following layout:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  | **Who?** | **What?** | **By When?** |  |
|  | **Sally Smith** | **Send budget details to project managers** | **May 21st** |  |
|  | **Hitesh Mistry** | **Contact conference organisers** | **May 15th** |  |
|  | **Etc.** | **Etc.** | **Etc.** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

The content of both flipcharts is circulated as a Word document to everyone as soon as possible after the meeting. This also allows the meeting owner to follow-up on any actions from the Next Steps flipchart before the next meeting.

To a large extent, this method of recording has replaced meeting minutes for most of our ‘problem-solving’ meetings. However, it will not be appropriate for every meeting. Some meetings may require full minutes either for legal reasons or to comply with company regulations.